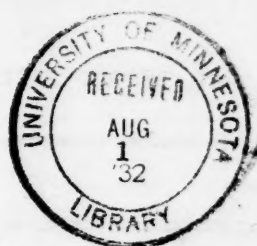


# THE CANADIAN FORUM

*A Monthly Journal of Literature and Public Affairs*



THE FUTILITY OF THE CONFERENCE

BRACKEN, BUTTER, and BENNETT

SOVIETS CAN DO NO RIGHT

PLANNED PRODUCTION

HELL

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## THE CANADIAN FORUM

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# THE CANADIAN FORUM

Vol. XII

TORONTO, AUGUST, 1932

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## THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

EVERYBODY from the Prince of Wales to the Honourable Howard Ferguson has declared that the Conference must not fail, but it looks to a mere outside observer as if most of them were whistling to keep our courage up. The very frank speeches of English public men such as Mr. Baldwin, and the negotiations between the British and Canadian cotton interests, have made it clear that the crux of the matter is the Canadian tariff. If we are not willing to lower it so as to admit more British goods, then we have nothing to offer to the British delegates except fine phrases. It is significant that the *Montreal Gazette* has been talking about laying the foundations at Ottawa this summer upon which the superstructure may be built later. This is the familiar formula with which Disarmament and Reparations Conferences in Europe are adjourned to the next Swiss holiday resort. So far not a member of our Canadian government or of the Canadian Manufacturers Association has got beyond generalities in expressing his desire to increase Imperial trade. Not one of them has mentioned any specific commodity which we are to buy in greater quantities from Great Britain, unless it be Welsh anthracite. There may be something in the tremendous potentialities, which are always being hinted at by official spokesmen, of our transferring large purchases from the United States to Britain. But in the test case of cotton goods, the only one on which the public have been given the facts, the British cotton manufacturers made it clear that the present Canadian offer of a prohibitive tariff against the States along with the continued high tariff against Britain is much more likely to transfer the market to mills in Canada rather than to mills in Lancashire. Incidentally the transfer will be at the expense of the Canadian consumer. Gossip from Ottawa says that Mr. Bennett has a surprise up his sleeve which may surprise even the Dominion Textile Co. No doubt, Mr. Bennett, like all our other pure prime ministers, doesn't know where his party campaign funds come from. But we never yet heard of a Canadian prime minister surprising campaign contributors so powerful as the gentlemen who control the Dominion Textile Co.

## THE SILLY SEASON

WITH the Imperial Conference meeting during the heat of August all records for the silly season in Canada should be surpassed this summer. It is to be hoped that some assiduous social

historian is already at work collecting the various absurdities and inanities which will undoubtedly fall from the lips of our Empire statesmen. In the meantime we record a couple of examples of purely local production. Members of the Canadian Authors Association at their annual meeting once more expressed their conviction that the names of Carman, Lampman, Scott and Roberts are worthy to be set beside those of Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley, and are destined to the same immortality. This is, of course, not a new outburst of silliness. That it should recur in the summer of 1932 shows how refreshingly immune our Canadian Authors are to the psychological effects of the depression. The other case is more intriguing. Mr. W. H. Moore, M.P., chose the occasion of an address to the Ontario branch of the Canadian Postmasters Association to deliver a denunciation of state socialism. Mr. Moore is, we understand, a member of the Liberal shadow cabinet. No doubt, when his party returns to power, he will use his influence to have our national postal services transferred to the rugged individualism of private enterprise.

## THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS

THE American presidential campaign is now in full swing. The voter this year is in a little better position than that of the proverbial donkey between the two bales of excelsior. For the victory of Roosevelt, with the South and West behind him, over the business interests of the East who were trying to turn the Democratic party into an indistinguishable replica of the Republican, is a hopeful sign. But Roosevelt himself has been extremely cautious and has convinced most independent observers that, while he may have the intelligence, he certainly has not the courage to deal effectively with the present crisis. It is clear that his arrival in the White House next March will not mean a resumption of Woodrow Wilson's efforts to correct those economic institutions which are frustrating 'the American dream' of equal rights for all to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But he will surely attempt something more than merely rescuing Business concerns from their bad investments, which is all that the Great Engineer has been able to think of. Meanwhile it is a sad commentary upon modern democracy that the greatest democratic community in the modern world, facing the most severe economic crisis in its history, will probably get more excited this autumn over its right to imbibe alcoholic stimulants than over any of the economic and financial readjustments which it must sooner or later undertake. On



the whole, the voter who wishes politics to be something more serious than the process of getting politicians in and out of office has little choice but to cast a protest vote for Norman Thomas, the only one of the candidates who shows an understanding that the real issue of our times is the control of our communal life by private profit-seeking business men.

### FIRST FALTERING STEPS

**I**N a world where there is only too little cause for rejoicing, one is all the more moved to gratitude for the achievements of Lausanne. The fact that the conference opened amid universal predictions of failure makes its unexpected outcome all the more striking. True, it means nothing more than that the statesmen of Europe, tentatively and with many reservations, have decided to adopt the course which for years has been dictated by common sense. But considering the power of resistance to common sense which statesmen all over the world have shown since the war, Lausanne is none the less a miracle for that. It almost looks as though the world were beginning to experience a rush of sanity to the head. It does not particularly matter that the details of the settlement are full of loopholes; that its finality, by the 'gentlemen's agreement', depends upon the dubious generosity of the United States; that a lack of goodwill on the part of either France or Germany—and goodwill is not at the moment a notable characteristic of either of them—might do much to nullify its effect. The plain fact is that the nightmare of Reparations is at an end. More than that, whatever the United States may protest publicly, the end of the War Debt situation is made inevitable. Now if this mood could be extended to tariffs; if the world economic conference that was to avoid all issues of importance could be persuaded to discuss realities; if the miracle of Lausanne could be repeated at Ottawa—then we might be able to look to the future with some glimmer of hope.

### SIR JOHN SIMON

**T**HE personal triumph of Ramsay MacDonald at Lausanne only serves to throw into darker contrast the deplorable state into which British foreign policy has fallen in the hands of Sir John Simon. After Lausanne, Geneva presents a picture which must make angels weep. One was ready to believe that the nadir of British policy had been reached by Sir Austen Chamberlain with his blind adherence to French policy; but even that was merely the blundering of invincible stupidity, and Sir Austen did somehow or other manage the happy blunder of Locarno. But behind the cold legality of Sir John is a deliberate and malevolent spirit of negation which is rapidly becoming the greatest wrecking force in international affairs. The effect of his ten months' tenure of office has been to hold the League completely immobile, to give Japan a free hand in the most shameless imperial adventure of this generation, to block with sinister tenacity every sincere effort at disarmament, and to create a mood of exasperated futility which may end by shattering such slender faith as remains in the possibility of international accord. The progress of Sir John from a brake on the wheels of Liberalism to the chief bulwark of diehard Toryism has been rapid and consistent since the war. He now seems to have reached his ultimate goal.

### COTTON AND SOCIALISM

**T**HE socialistic tendency of Mr. Bennett's tariff legislation deserves more attention than it is receiving. When he inaugurated his tariff programme he promised that any protected interests who were found to be abusing their privileges by exploiting the consumer would be punished. To carry out this promise effectively would have meant the setting up of elaborate government machinery for investigating the costs, technical methods and selling prices of every protected industry; in fact we should have had a degree of state supervision and interference in industry that would be only one step short of socialism, i.e., the carrying on of the industry by the state itself. Mr. Bennett, of course, did nothing to fulfil his promise. He has not even filled the positions on the Tariff Board which he created with such a rhetorical flourish. But he has gone on developing his theory of protection to ever fuller proportions. Protection at first in this country was to be temporary, for the assistance of 'infant industries'. In its second stage it became permanent, but the theory was that the tariff only equalized costs of native and foreign producers and still permitted a reasonable amount of outside competition. This was roughly the theory on which Mr. King's Tariff Advisory Board worked. But now, in its third stage, the purpose of the tariff is to give a monopoly of the market to the Canadian producer. The *Winnipeg Free Press* has been pointing out what are the logical implications of this third stage, and we can not do better than quote it:—

The consuming public is to be turned over to a particular industry. This industry is to be given the monopoly of supplying their wants along certain lines. It will be the judge of the quality, the pattern and the styles, the price to which the public will be obliged to submit. It will decide what profits it requires. It will make such arrangements for increased efficiency in the interests of cheaper production as seems good to it. Subject to all these conditions, the people will be allowed to buy and wear cottons. There is just one more step to go; and it is odd that it has never occurred to the cotton magnates that, if the theory is sound, it is bound to be taken one of these days. If Canadian people exist for the purpose of wearing Canadian cottons to the supposed end that wealth will thus be created and work supplied, why not nationalize the business and turn the profit in to the State? The inevitable end of protection as it is now tending is State Socialism.

### DELEGATIONS TO RUSSIA

**I**NTEREST in the 'Russian Experiment' is increasing, particularly in those countries which have been hardest hit by the depression. The development of the Five-Year Plan has dramatized the progress of the worker's state, and it is becoming evident to the rest of the world that planned production can eliminate unemployment and permit the building up of industry on a grand scale at a time when a sharp decline is characteristic of nearly all other national economies. This increased interest is shown by the rising tide of tourist traffic towards the Soviet Union, and by the large numbers of authors, magazine writers, and newspaper reporters who are finding there a new field for copy. What is not so generally known, in the bourgeois world, is that for the last year or two the U.S. S.R. has been inviting groups of workers from all countries to visit the Union. These delegations are sent to Russia under the auspices of various left-wing labour organizations, and after they cross the border



they have no expenses to meet but are treated as the guests of the Soviet Union. The Canadian Section of the Friends of the Soviet Union, a society which is interested in promoting a better understanding between Canada and the U.S.S.R., and a resumption of trade relations between the two countries—has received an invitation to send a delegation of fifteen workers to the celebration of November 7th in Moscow. The members are to be largely selected from the basic industries, mining, lumbering, railways, metallurgical industries, etc., but some women workers and unemployed will be included. They will spend about six weeks in the U.S.S.R. and will be given an opportunity to investigate the working conditions which prevail in Russian industry. Elections of delegates are held in factories and work-shops, and so far as possible non-Communists are chosen. There is no point in sending Communists—who are already persuaded of the superiority of Russian methods.

#### EDITORIAL CHANGES

THE CANADIAN FORUM loses from its editorial committee this summer three of its valued members, Professor and Mrs. Barker Fairley and Mr. Thoreau Macdonald. Professor Fairley was at the time of his retirement the senior member on the committee. He has been connected with THE CANADIAN FORUM ever since its inception, and during the last few years he has acted as chairman of the committee as well as being a frequent contributor of articles. He leaves us now to go to Manchester to become head of the department of German in Manchester University. Mrs. Fairley has long been active upon the literary side of the journal both as editor and as writer. Thoreau Macdonald has been art editor and has contributed the drawings upon the front cover which have given THE CANADIAN FORUM a distinctive place among journals of its kind. We shall miss all three of them and we part from them with sincere regret.

#### EXPRESSION

I do not like the steady beat  
Of regular rime to eke out metre.  
I want a rhythm subtler far  
Than any I have known,  
With music of recurring sound  
In unexpected places,  
With absences that startle  
To attention and bring the thought  
Or feeling; with turns, quite unforeseen,  
Half-rimes, faint echoes,  
That demand the subtler ear.  
I want a whole  
That recreates  
In readers' hearts  
The vision of the poet,  
With the emotion felt  
Before he formed his words,  
When he knew hell or heaven.

FRANCES R. ANGUS

#### PLANNED PRODUCTION

THERE is at least one feature of the present depression in Canada which sharply distinguishes it from all previous economic crises, and that is the manner in which the professional and intellectual classes are losing faith in the fundamental features of our existing social system, and are becoming more and more critical of nearly all of our respectable and well-established institutions. This sudden swing towards radical ideas has so far found little organized expression, it is not clearly reflected in the daily press, but any clear-sighted observer will find evidence that it is surging and bubbling throughout the whole of middle-class society. In casual conversations in all kinds of places—in hotel rotundas, in railway smoking compartments, in the course of ordinary business discussions, in the little study and discussion groups which are springing up automatically in nearly every town and city in the Dominion—there are signs of an awakening critical interest in all the phases of our present social order. Even in Canada, the last stronghold of perfect mental propriety and decorum (O God! O Montreal!) there have always been occasional rebels who have lifted impotent voices against hypocrisy and complacency in high places, but what is significant about the present situation is that these subversive ideas are gaining ground among the more stable elements, among the big battalions of sturdy individualists, among lawyers and bank managers, ministers and school-masters, business executives and civil engineers. The middle-class, which acts as a buffer state between the owing class and the proletariat and poor farmers, is absorbing a large number of the shocks incident to the depression, and it is beginning to lose a part of its former resiliency.

\* \* \*

This insurgency among the Canadian intellectuals, this movement of the middle-class away from traditional beliefs and towards radical ideas has, so far, no cohesion or discipline. The spirit of unrest has not found expression in action, and most of what passes for radical thought is timid and confused. There is a dawning suspicion in the middle-class mind that the competitive system, or individualism, or capitalism, is not the land of middle-class promise that it once seemed to be, but although the capitalist fields become increasingly barren and uncomfortable, there is a timorous hesitancy about crossing over to the distant green fields of socialism, and of those who have passed over there are few who have burned their bridges behind them. Just in case the apologists for individualism are right, and this is only another dip in the business cycle—a little more severe than usual—it is just as well that the bridges should be kept in good repair, ready for a hasty retreat when the competitive system once more gets into its stride and begins to produce milk and honey again on a mass production basis. Canada has never had a socialist Prime Minister who could wear knee-breeches and a gilt sword, and so prove conclusively that Socialism may be an eminently respectable doctrine (so long as it is not acted upon) and so, in this country it is still a word that has odious connotations. As for communism, it is unthinkable that any prominent Canadian author (such as we have) should follow the example of Theodore Dreiser and announce himself as an adherent of communist doctrine.

Instead of adopting any comprehensive political philosophy, which holds together and has a definite objective, the emergent radical tends to select one particular little flaw in the present system, and on this favoured blemish he is inclined to focus his whole attention. As a result we have reformist cranks and idealists of all kinds who are convinced that civilization (i.e. Capitalism) can only be salvaged by the adoption of their particular pet cure-all. So we have Free Bread Leagues, and Birth-Control Societies, Brotherhood Fellowships, and Single Taxers, and innumerable monetary reform leagues, which favour inflation, deflation, social credits, bi-metalism, a managed currency, an Empire currency, and the Equitist principle of one dollar being made equivalent to one hour's adult labour time. Nearly all these organizations have some ideas which are admirable in the abstract, and some of their principles will undoubtedly be adopted by society in the future. But none of them are based upon a sufficiently broad philosophy, nor are any of them likely to bring about the regeneration of society that their initiates confidently anticipate. Quite apart from these one-idea enthusiasts there are numbers of people who feel that the competitive anarchy and planlessness of production which we now suffer is thoroughly discredited, but instead of concentrating upon practical alternatives, they build Utopian castles in the air, after the fashion of Plato and Bacon, Bellamy and H. G. Wells. All these ideals look towards a more socialized state, and a Socialist state implies a planned state. But there is a tremendous difference between day-dreaming and systematic planning. The distinction between Utopian, and Scientific or Practical Socialism, is that Scientific Socialism works only with the material at hand—or at any rate, in sight—whereas the Utopian's mental processes are not confined to this mundane sphere but operate through infinite space.

\* \* \*

In the Reader's Forum of our present issue there appears a letter from Mr. W. L. Grant. Mr. Grant is a little troubled by the individualistic methods, at present in vogue, by which we produce our new supply of citizens. If, under a socialized economy, we are to have planned production, surely the most important product of society—the new generation—must be planned as well. Now it is in just such questions as these that we touch the boundary between Utopian and Practical Socialism. In the first place Socialism is not an end, but only the means to an end. It will not automatically solve any such problems for us, but it will provide machinery that will enable us to unravel such enigmas much more easily. I am inclined to think that a society which operates upon much more social lines than the one we know at present, will be in no great haste to interfere with natural laws such as 'the raw lust of every boy and girl whom nature drives together' until, upon mature consideration, it decides that over-production of new citizens is taking place—that is to say over-production from a social point of view. Up to the present time 'raw lust' has been the basis of all reproduction, and is likely to continue so for some time, in spite of Mr. Aldous Huxley and his *Brave New World*. Under our competitive system too great a surplus of population is a decided liability, and the question arises why we should 'bring up, find work for, give unemployment insurance to, and eventually grant Old Age Pensions to' some hundreds of thousands of superfluous individuals. But

in Russia, the only country today which is operating under a completely socialized system, the new citizen has become an asset instead of a liability, and, in spite of lowered mortality rates and a huge annual increase in the population, there is no unemployment but an actual shortage of workers. It is possible that Russia is encouraging an increase of population at present partly for political reasons, just as the Roman Catholic Church approves of a high birth-rate among Roman Catholics, and as France has done in the past for similar reasons—so that there shall be more Communists, or Roman Catholics, or Frenchmen, in proportion to the rest of the world's population. There will always be a tendency towards the encouragement of a high birth-rate in all countries, so long as chauvinism and narrow economic nationalism remains the guiding aim of all our statesmen. But at present, while surplus population is a serious problem in most capitalist countries, it presents no immediate difficulties to a socialized community.

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It is not quite clear whether Mr. Grant is worried about the question of numerical increase, or if he is dissatisfied with the grade of new citizens which we are now producing. Is it a problem of quantity or of quality? If the former, we have yet no means of knowing whether there will be any danger of over-population in a socialist society. In France there is a declining population, and in England the trend is towards a stationary situation. In all Western countries there is a very low birth-rate among the wealthy and upper-middle-classes, and these classes would tend to disappear if they were not constantly recruited from below. A society that had achieved a high standard of living for the whole community might well be faced with a declining population. In that event it would probably be necessary, in time, to offer bounties and special inducements to the more desirable types of parent, in order to encourage the production of larger families. This would not involve a state monopoly of breeding, but it would imply a recognition, on the part of society, that the mother who produces a normal healthy baby is performing a service to the state at least equal to that of the inventor who turns out a new type of tractor or aeroplane. Where the question of quality is concerned, the problem is not so much one of genetics as it is a practical question of deciding what kind of men and women we want to produce. Are we aiming at standardization, or at the widest range of variation? Fortunately, the great majority of babies who arrive in the world are amazingly healthy little animals, with potentialities for physical and mental development which, in past generations have never been realized to anything like their full capacity. If we can give them all a fair show—keep them out of slums, give them fresh air and sunlight and the right kind of food, stimulate their enquiring minds and educate them towards social ends—then we need not be pessimistic about the future of the human race.

J. F. W.

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## THE FUTILITY OF THE CONFERENCE

By STEPHEN ELYOT

THE futility of the present Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa flows naturally and inevitably from the facts of the world situation and the antinomies which inhere in the present economic system. When Mr. Bennett startled the last Imperial Conference in London with his proposal for Empire Economic Unity he made a bold gesture which proved on examination to contain little more than the usual quantum of irresponsibility and gusto which we have grown to expect in Mr. Bennett. The British position with regard to Mr. Bennett's proposal for a preferential Empire tariff was placed beyond all doubt when Ramsay MacDonald rose in the House of Commons and replied: 'We cannot do it,' which the *Spectator* dressed up in the Latin garb of *non possumus* and gave the Conference, perhaps unwittingly, its best epitome.

The present Conference was fathered on the Commonwealth by Mr. Bennett and was hailed at the time as a master-stroke of Imperial diplomacy which would eventually gather the British Commonwealth of Nations together in the bonds of mutual trade and mutual advantage. I propose to show, however, that far from being a cementing influence, it will expose the real fissures which have hitherto been hidden beneath the gloss of racial sentimentality.

I suppose it is inevitable that a tariff-ridden world economy should tend to revive a great many of the arguments in favour of Free Trade. This has been done quite recently by Sir Norman Angell in much the same form as that used by Mr. Bertrand Russell seventeen years ago in his *Political Ideals*. 'Nobody proposes to set up a tariff between England and Scotland, or between Lancashire and Yorkshire,' writes Mr. Russell. 'Yet the arguments by which tariffs between nations are supported might be just as well used to defend tariffs between counties.' I question very much if this is so. Neither Mr. Russell nor his recent imitator carry their inquiry far enough and the matter is therefore dismissed too lightly. The ideal of Free Trade, implicitly or explicitly, presupposes a fundamentally changed social order, and any attempt to apply its arguments to the present system is like giving the right medicine to the wrong patient. Tariffs, properly regarded, are a measure of class defense. If universal Free Trade were adopted in the present social scheme the fusion of economic forces would set up political reverberations of the most far-reaching kind. Economic forces dominate political forces. Add to this the fact that certain clearly defined groups centre about their respective political nuclei which enables them to dominate the national sphere for their own profit.

If I elaborate this point a little, as I intend to, it is because I believe that an understanding of the close connection between these possessive group interests and the tariff rings which encircle them is vital to a clear grasp of the fallacies underlying the Conference at Ottawa. I have introduced the element of Free Trade into this discussion because preferential tariffs and quotas are actually a mild application of its principles.

Let me exemplify the less obvious purpose served by the present tariff system by setting up an imaginary state of Free Trade between Great Britain and Canada. The first probable consequence would be an expansion in the British market for Canadian raw materials and

foodstuffs and a relative expansion in the Canadian market for British commodities. This new spate of trade bursting from its tariff banks, like the Mississippi breaking from its levees, would make new channels for itself and leave others high and dry. Following this we would see the rise of the West to prosperity and power which would at the same time create a corresponding shrinkage in the present financial and industrial hegemony of the East. The West would then begin to exert its economic pressure in the political sphere by entrenching its interests in a strong Farmer's Party. It is quite possible too, in these circumstances, for the Capital to be moved to Winnipeg or Edmonton and that the Conservative Party, in weak opposition, would receive its subsidies from the British Federation of Industries.

What then, it must be asked, would be the effect of a tariffless world economy? How would the group interests as they are established at present hold their privileges and power together without a strong ring of tariffs? No more than a sheaf of wheat without its binding. Parliament is the instrument of class interests, and tariffs are an excellent means of maintaining the present balance. They serve to keep the domestic market free of foreign taint and consequently the owning class from the hazards of international competition.

Yet this in despite, an Imperial Economic Conference is to meet at Ottawa with no less than the respective group interests of Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India, and the rest of the Commonwealth attempting to reconcile their economic antagonisms. Indeed, and laughably, they resemble a group of gamblers who have been losing money for the past three years and have gathered around a gaming table to see if some arrangement cannot be made whereby they will all make money without any of them losing. How shall we divide the sum of our Empire trade so as to make the parts greater than the whole?

There has been so much nonsense in the air lately about trade that I am convinced now more than ever that it is much more talked about than understood. It is generally conceived of in such misleading figures as 'The life-blood of the Nation' and suchlike, which have given shape to some of the most fantastic notions of which the present Conference offers one of the most striking examples.

Trade must be regarded as fulfilling twin purposes: (1) the conversion of commodity values in terms of goods into gold values in terms of money and (2) the exchange of goods and services in a highly specialized process of production. When a manufacturer sells goods for consumption (actually, of course, he does not care a fig whether they are consumed or not, provided they are paid for) he thinks of trade in terms of the first category by which his goods are converted into gold values embodying his profit: when he buys materials or machinery, trade drops into the second category, that of being an excellent device for the convenient exchange of goods. The motives by which production is actuated in the present social scheme take no account of the highly social function performed by trade except perhaps as an incidental process by which sales are made possible under the stimulus of demand.



Trade then is like a great alembic in the laboratories of our modern alchemists which distills gold, not from the baser metals, (except in the case of the armament manufacturers) but from boots, bottles, and beetle-powder. But our modern alchemist has achieved even more extraordinary things in fact than his medieval prototypes ventured on in their dreams. Not only does he transmute his pickles and pikestaffs into gold but he can change his gold back again *at some future time* into a yacht for his wife or pearls for his mistress or, if he is discreet, into a seat in the Senate. Therein lies the secret of the power of gold: its power over the future.

Considering as I do that trade is rather the effect than the cause of prosperity, that it is, in essence, a social link between deeper economic forces, those of production and consumption, the question must be asked: In which of the above categories will the Imperial Conference place the question of trade? Will it regard it as a means of building up greater gold reserves for one member at the inevitable expense of another via favourable trade balances, or will it regard the question with a view to creating a greater exchange of goods? To think the latter would be to misunderstand the whole plot and purpose of the Capitalist economy. The ostensible purpose at Ottawa is to find ways

and means for a greater interflow of Empire goods while actually the real object, so far as each represented unit is concerned, is to sell more than they buy. The internal process of distribution has been choked by a moneyless domestic market, and goods which could be consumed at home are being disposed of abroad.

Let us assume, however, to give the Devil his due, that the Conference faithfully intends to create a fuller exchange of goods (which would involve no more gold) it should be patent that such a scheme is impossible without first providing for a greater consumption of those goods. The truth of the matter, which we have been chasing like an elusive butterfly, rests at last on this fact. The Conference is committed to the colossal folly of treating the symptom instead of the disease: it is treating the eruption instead of the fever. To fix the responsibility for the present depression in terms of trade restrictions is to raise a monument to ignorance and the worst kind of skullduddery.

Something now remains to be said about the proposed diversion of trade which now flows in foreign channels into the Empire tradeways. For my part it will remain unsaid. The reader who has followed this discussion carefully will require no demonstration on my part to see the mad futility of such a solution. He who requires a demonstration does not need one.

## BRACKEN, BUTTER AND BENNETT

By W. R. HERBERT

ON June 16th last the people of Manitoba returned the Bracken Government to power with an enhanced majority; and thereby hangs a tale.

Political wise-acres said it couldn't be done. There were signs and portents. It was written in the stars that Mr. Bracken would lead only a corporal's guard of followers in the new legislature. No government could withstand the discontent of the people in this year of depression 1932. The Brackenites had been in office for ten years and, so, were due for a tumble. The Conservatives had been out of office for almost twenty years, they were organized to the hilt, and the plum of office dangled almost within their reach. The Bracken Progressives had no 'political sense'; and the provincial debt had increased alarmingly during their regime. The people were fed-up with Mr. Bracken and his taxes. Thus spake Zarathustra. Conservative oracles gave it out that Colonel Fawcett Taylor, the Tory Joshua, would march triumphantly into the new legislature with thirty-five stalwarts behind him. But, alas for those who read the political heavens! Mr. Bracken came back stronger than ever and the Conservative group lost a third of its former strength in the legislature.

What happened? Some say federal politics did the trick. Others give the credit to the Bracken Government's exceptionally good record. Still others explain it by the 'non-partizan' appeal made by the Liberal-Progressive coalition organization. All three, as a matter of fact, were effective. Possibly as effective as anything else was the sheer stupidity of the Conservative campaign. The Bracken tacticians were a jump ahead of the Conservatives at every turn; and

the people of Manitoba were about three jumps ahead of the Brackenites.

Last September Premier Bracken proposed a moratorium on party politics, and offered to reorganize his cabinet to include Conservative, Liberal, and Labour leaders. Some say the suggestion was clever politics; others called it statesmanship. Anyhow; the people liked it. The Liberals, first cousins to the Progressives, accepted the proposal. Labour, for obvious reasons, was not interested. The Conservatives turned down the proposition with a boorishness which jolted the sensibilities of the good folk of Manitoba. The true-blue Tory flag was hoisted to the top of the mast and the well-oiled Conservative machine swung into action on a strictly party-politics basis. That was Conservative blunder number one, for Manitobans were weary of party politics in the provincial arena. The offer of non-partizan administration appealed to the common sense of the electorate and it was undoubtedly the factor which counted most in the election of coalition candidates.

The vote-grabbing tactics of the Manitoba Conservative Party might have been effective under conditions existing in 1895; but for 1932 they were duds. Not a finesse in a carload. All the old tricks in the moth-eaten political bag were dragged forth. The charge of 'extravagance' was hurled at the Government with violence fit to shake the foundations of Hell. When the Government pointed pleasantly to the fact that Manitoba's financial position was head and shoulders above that of every other western province the Conservative directors of strategy stupidly evaded the challenge and shouted 'extravagance' a little louder.

The good people of Manitoba were told that all the honest men, all the clever men, all the good men, were Conservative parishioners. "There aint no flies on us" was adopted as the Tory chant, and they expected the people to believe it. Regardless! Pamphlets and newspaper advertisements were done up in the mode of a by-gone day; lots of black-face type, countless charges of waste and mismanagement, and cooked figures to 'show up' the Government's financial record. Old stuff; all of it. The sort of stuff that went over big a generation ago. The Conservative campaign was addressed to an unread, unknowing electorate. The Tory Napoleons didn't know that during the past twenty years literacy has extended, newspapers have reached every home and radio has eliminated dark ignorance of daily occurrences. And promises! Economy. Balanced budget. Reduced taxes. Enlarged services. Reduced expenditures (and not at the expense of widows 'n' children, mind you. This last crack referred to the Government's curtailment of allowances under the Child Welfare Act). Promises were flung about with wild and hilarious abandon. The good old days of 1930 again.

Strange though it may seem, Mr. Bennett was the storm-axis of a major cyclone of the campaign. Not Mr. Bennett personally, of course. But Mr. Bennett as the god-head of the political party which represents the things most repugnant to the western farmer.

In 1930 Mr. Bennett sold his end-unemployment, protect-home-industries, make-tariffs-fight-for-you nostrum to the West. Sold it properly. Today he couldn't sell five cents worth. Perhaps the West took Mr. Bennett too seriously in 1930. They were feeling low. Spirits jaded. Purses empty. Along came a well-fed fellow with lots of personality and pep, offering a tariff scheme which would knock the spots out of depression. A fellow who was ready, willing and able to blast a way to the world's markets for prairie wheat. A fellow who would protect eastern manufacturers without penalizing western producers. A fellow who would make treaties to raise the local price of butter and eggs. A damn-fine fella, in short. The gambling West had enough imagination to bet on a horse like that.

The West, in 1930, didn't actually believe Mr. Bennett would, or could, do the things he promised. They hoped hard; but they didn't believe. Now they are sore because those things have not been done which couldn't be done. The West feels a bit sheepish about that 1930 election. It would like to share with somebody else the blame for its foolishness; and Mr. Bennett has been unanimously chosen as scapegoat. The Manitoba election provided the first opportunity to register a protest against Mr. Bennett and his Conservative medicine.

The Liberal-Progressive coalition forces did not have to work over-time to make things interesting. A banked-up fire of resentment was smouldering in every constituency, and all the anti-Conservative supporters had to do was throw a bit of butter into the embers. This they did, right merrily, by reciting from Mr. Bennett's 1930 speeches, and from Hansard, and from grain market and produce market reports. The idea spread like wildfire, and Mr. Bennett was licked to a frazzle without coming near the scene of battle. With something approaching fiendish glee, Liberal-Progressive campaigners linked up the provincial Conservatives with Bennettism. The electors couldn't vote

against Mr. Bennett directly, so they did the next best thing.

An actual conversation which took place in a rural riding illustrates the point better than a page of explanation. A Liberal-Progressive candidate who was opposed by a Conservative physician called on a Ukrainian farmer. The farmer had a crippled son. The candidate opened with that raw geniality of politicians:

'Well, John; how are you? Anything new?'

'You bet,' John replied, smiling broadly. 'Doctor ——— (the Conservative candidate) been around. He's gonna fix my boy.'

'That's great! I'm glad to hear it, John. But it'll cost you a lot of money for the doctor's bill.' The candidate sensed defeat as he contributed this bit.

'Oh, no!' John exclaimed. 'Doctor ———'s gonna fix 'im and do it for nothing.'

There was a hopelessness in the candidate's voice as he ventured the inevitable: 'Well; I guess you vote Conservative, then.'

'Oh, no!' replied John, with much emphasis. 'I not gonna vote for butter ten cents a pound.'

A simple, homely incident; but a brilliant sidelight on the western mind.

Why are butter and eggs selling at ruinous prices? Because Mr. Bennett doesn't know how to make decent commercial treaties. Why are hides left to rot on manure piles? Because Mr. Bennett gives a preference to New Zealand hides and leather. Why hasn't the western farmer's purchasing power budged from the irreducible minimum during the past two years? Because Mr. Bennett's tariff policy closes foreign markets to Canadian exportable surpluses. Why is money so tight in the West? Because Mr. Bennett lavishes all his favours upon the bankers and mortgage companies. Thus goes the West's economic catechism. Right and left, going and coming, Mr. Bennett gets it in the neck. Undoubtedly he deserves a lot of it; but probably he is receiving more than he deserves.

In addition to the general grouch, Manitobans have a particular anti-Bennett axe to grind in the Provincial Savings Office affair. Last winter a run on the perfectly solvent but not too liquid provincial institution drove Mr. Bracken to turning the business over to the chartered banks. This course was adopted after Premier Bennett had refused to give the Manitoba government a federal guarantee which would have induced the banks to advance enough cash to meet the emergency. When the excitement was all over, and the banks had absorbed 40,000 nice new customers, it was learned that Mr. Bennett had granted to the banks the guarantee which he had refused to the provincial government! And then, to add insult to injury, a select committee of the Manitoba Legislature reported, after a lengthy inquiry, that the run on the savings office had been stimulated by big-wigs of the Conservative Party for political purposes.

And so, by and large, the Manitoba election was as much a black-eye for Mr. Bennett and the federal Conservative Party as it was an endorsement of anything provincial. And there are many signs which indicate that Manitoba was speaking for the entire prairie country. But that's another story. A story which should be carefully read and digested by Liberals, Progressives, and Labourites; and others in western Canada who are chafing at the bit for another federal election.



## ON COMING HOME

By C. S. RITCHIE

**Y**OU have been away five years', a chatty fellow-passenger, said to me on the voyage out, 'you'll find Canada much changed'. From the depths of my deck-chair, I surveyed the blue waters of the Atlantic. 'I expect so', I replied politely and, fearing that he intended to corroborate his remarks by a deluge of facts, I hastily took refuge in my novel again. In point of fact, however, there was nothing that I expected so little. Canada changed, indeed! With the Conservative party returned by an immense majority at the polls, with Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Bennett keeping up their vociferous trans-Atlantic duet on the theme of our unplumbed natural resources, while the press in frantic chorus alternated between sentimental allusions to 'the bonds of Empire' and the frantic chant of 'Canada first'. Perhaps I should find my native land a little more self-consciously Canadian than before, but one must reconcile oneself to these ugly blotches of national self-assertiveness in the hope that they will prove merely the passing phenomena of adolescence. Doubtless too the depression had affected conditions seriously (how seriously I had then no idea); there would be some thousands of unemployed, and many people suffering from that morning-after feeling which has succeeded an orgy of paper-prosperity. But it hardly seemed possible that the solid fabric of Canadian life should have received any serious shock.

Now, after six months in Canada, I have changed my mind. Behind the smoke-screen of after-dinner speeches; behind the sunshine-columns and loud-mouthed boasting of the press, something has been happening in the last five years, something of very great significance. The tempo of Canadian life and thought has changed. The change is all about us but it is none the less difficult of analysis. For me to attempt to analyse it must appear presumptuous to many intelligent Canadians who have watched its gradual development and have had greater opportunities than myself to grasp its full implications. My only excuse for my presumption must be that my impressions may possess a certain freshness of their own. The new tendencies have struck me with the full shock of novelty which must have worn off for many who have been conscious for years now that although the surface of the Canadian scene has not greatly changed an undertow has set in in a new direction.

When I left Canada the country was flushed with prosperity. God was in his Heaven and all was right in King Street and St. James Street. The bouncing self-satisfaction of successful Big Business was everywhere apparent. The twentieth century was to be Canada's. Politicians boomed portentously of our magnificent destiny and patronizingly proffered their advice to an effete mother country. Our young business men talked stocks and shares with happy assurance, and a 'good opening in business' seemed the open sesame to delightful vistas of easy and ever-easier cash. Meanwhile their elders dreamed dreams of expanding industry, bigger incomes, and consequently bigger and better cars and country clubs, more trips abroad for their wives and more ambitious *debuts* for their daughters. And the day-to-day life of the mass of our people went on much as it had always gone on, only more comfortably, much more comfortably.

Today the situation is very different and there is no necessity to stress the contrast. Business, as we all know, is in a difficult and precarious situation. We have over 700,000 unemployed, and an employment problem which in proportion to our population is graver than that of Great Britain. The national mood is one of disillusionment. This disillusionment may be temporary, to disappear with a return of prosperity, but it has given rise to a questioning frame of mind which is destined to have permanent results. Especially does the new attitude manifest itself among the youth of the country. The young men and women of this country are at the present moment in a state of what the late Lord Tennyson described as 'honest doubt'. They are very seriously questioning the validity of all sorts of established concepts in the spheres of economics, politics, and behaviour. Whenever a few young men are gathered together, whether they be students, or stockbrokers, or simply 'looking for a job', conversation seems inevitably to veer round to topics which in the old days were the special preserve of the so-called *intelligentia*. The average young man has become interested in new things, and in a new way. 'For the last two or three years', a professor at Toronto University said to me the other day, 'we have been getting a new type of student—much keener and above all much more *serious-minded*'. This new note of serious-mindedness among young people is one of the things which cannot fail to strike anyone who remembers the breezy materialism of the average Canadian youth of the post-war period. Much of the discussion may be crude and naïve enough, but its significance lies in the fact that it indicates a new state of mind. One of the characteristics of this state of mind is, I believe, an increasing indifference to the old form of flag-waving nationalism. It seems as though the nerve which responded to that particular form of propaganda had at last been deadened. National self-boasting is a declining industry, and the older generation are often shocked by a new and strange indifference to the old slogans. Closely connected with this phenomenon is the very real enthusiasm in this country for the cause of disarmament, and the growth of a considerable body of fairly organized pacifist opinion.

With the decline of the more truculent forms of nationalism has gone an increasing distrust of the class of politicians who have pandered to those instincts. It is almost a commonplace to say that the provincial assemblies, and in a lesser degree the parliament at Ottawa, have suffered a grave loss of prestige in the eyes of the Canadian people. The game of party politics is watched by the people in normal times with good-humoured cynicism, but in times like these the feeling deepens to one of distrust. The Beauharnois scandal and the revelations of the Hydro probe have immeasurably discredited both the political parties.

Moreover, the cleavage between the two parties no longer responds to any really vital difference of political doctrine—the old labels of Conservatives and Liberals are merely superficial tags conveniently designating two groups of hack-politicians, who are busily engaged in pressing upon the attention of the country the overwhelming proofs of each others' corruption and inefficiency, while in the dreary atmosphere of the



Senate slumber the pompous relics of extinct party contests. Doubtless there are many honest and hard-working men at Ottawa who are seriously trying to think in terms of the future and act not in the spirit of party politics but with wise long-sightedness. But there is no figure at Ottawa who has any real hold on the imagination of the people. And the phrase 'it's a dirty game' which one so often hears applied to our party-politics represents, I think, pretty accurately the attitude of the average Canadian.

The declining authority of the old political parties has led some people to ask the question: 'Is Canada going Socialist?' The answer to this question is not altogether so simple as it appears at first sight. The Socialist group in Parliament is small and it undoubtedly inspires profound mistrust among the great mass of middle-class people. And official Socialist party doctrine has made but little headway in this country. Nevertheless the habits of mind, the vague general viewpoint so often roughly associated with the word 'socialist' undoubtedly dominate a great deal of the more modern political thinking of Canadians. People who would certainly object to being labelled as socialists will advocate quite freely the necessity for a more controlled and correlated economic system and are not in the least shocked at the idea of interfering with the free working of capitalism. The attractive phrase 'national planning' has many devotees though some of them seem a little vague if pressed for detailed schemes. The widespread interest felt here in the Russian experiment is also symptomatic. The Five Year Plan appeals to the virility in us by its gigantic practical scope and relentless enthusiasm, but we are a little frightened of the baldness of the materialistic philosophy which accompanies it. Among younger men, however, there is no political topic which arouses more eager interest than that of Russia, and if some of the enthusiasm expressed is a little uncritical then that is a natural reaction against the hysterical attitude of the press and Big Business. The fact of the matter is that our youth is feeling about for a moral purpose to which to hitch its star. As a people we like to have something to do of a practical nature, and we like to have a 'moral' reason for doing it. Both these impulses used to be satisfied by the economic and moral necessity to 'make one's way in the world' which was imposed upon most of us in our youth. But nowadays not only is it increasingly difficult in practice to make one's way in the world but the proposition that individual profit-seeking is a duty has been damaged beyond repair. The 'from office-boy to millionaire' philosophy of success has collapsed on moral grounds at the very moment when it has become a practical impossibility.

This situation which is more or less true in most of the industrialized countries of the west takes on a special interest in Canada because in this country Big Business is a comparatively recent affair. When Lord Bryce wrote his study of Canadian democracy he was still able to state that in Canada there were no great extremes of wealth and poverty and very few really rich men.

The Canadian has never believed in any essential difference between the classes except that of bank-balance. Living for the most part in small communities and often educated in the same schools, we have been at too close quarters to allow of the possibility of any hedge of reverential admiration growing up about any particular class. Attempts to impose an

aristocratic mould upon this country in the form of hereditary titles, at one time put forward, have met with resentment and, more deadly still, with mockery. The small-town spirit, still strong within most Canadians, has its faults but it has always been the enemy of social affectation. Our newly-sprouted plutocracy, uneasily conscious of this, has adopted a 'hail-fellow-well-met attitude' toward its poorer neighbours. Acutely cash-conscious, our newly rich have not quite escaped their old fear of what the Mrs. Smith next door will be saying about 'their putting on airs'. Canada is still far from a millionaire's country and the more sophisticated of the wealthy classes, craving their full need of social recognition, are inevitably drawn to the old world where cash now receives the remnants of the respect once paid to birth.

Our tradition then in this country is a tradition of social egalitarianism. And legislation for the curtailment of huge individual profits with their attendant social results is in no sense alien to the Canadian background. A readjustment of society on a basis of something like equality of income would be far less difficult here than in England or the United States where the plutocracy has taken so much deeper roots.

But if one may, as I think one may, foresee far-reaching economic changes in this country what can be said of the cultural, moral, and intellectual life of our people? Are we moving or standing still? Skirting the dangerous pitfalls of generalization which here open before me I shall resort to two quotations. One is the phrase of an eminent Canadian educationalist. 'Canada' he said 'is the last refuge of the old authentic Puritan spirit'. The other is the awed exclamation of an Englishman whom I encountered on his return from a tour of the Dominions; on my asking him his impression of Canada he replied in feeling tones 'my God but Canada is clean'. How much of our Puritanism is skin deep is a question for the cynic, but I think it may fairly be said that the morality of the small pioneering community is still the dominant morality of the people. The majority of people of over forty years of age in this country, if not religious, at least possess strongly embedded sectarian prejudices, and in questions of sexual behaviour, if not 'virtuous', they are still frightened. In neither sphere have we yet developed a civilized spirit of tolerance and common sense. If you think I exaggerate spend a few years in a Canadian small town or farming community and try advocating agnosticism or 'the new sexual ethic'. Among the younger generation unquestionably a change of viewpoint is pretty general. The youth of seventeen, the young man and young woman of twenty-four and twenty-five has felt, and in many cases responded to new influences. But the rather crude materialism which one meets with in 'advanced' circles among young people is usually strongly tinged with the moral earnestness of their parents and grandparents, and often also with their intolerance.

Nevertheless, there are not wanting signs that the Canadian is getting increasingly uncomfortable in the strait-jacket of small-town morality. Here, as in the department of economics, people are thinking along new lines and talking in a new vocabulary. What is vitally important now is that in education and through the press a really powerful intellectual leadership should make itself felt. This can never be the case so long as universities are degree-producing machines, and the press is unrepentantly sensationalist.

We are in the throes of bringing forth a new cultural tradition in this country—a tradition to suit changing conditions—and it is imperative that this attempt should not be still-born. The Canadian 'intellectual', to employ a much abused term, is threatened in two ways. First, he is exposed to the indifference of the majority, and secondly to the coddling of his own sympathizers. 'Considering it was done right here in Toronto I think its marvelous' a warm-hearted Toronto lady said to me the other day in discussing the work of a local artist. I tried mildly to suggest that this fact did not affect the aesthetic value of the work in question and I am afraid she thought me a little

unpatriotic. The artists and writers and scholars of this country have every right to resent this kind of patronage. Nothing creative can be born in the parochial atmosphere of mutual self-congratulation.

Evidently, however, in almost every direction in which one looks there is a stirring of new currents in Canadian life. The atmosphere has changed—we are less comfortable and more alive. New challenges are offered us. Canada, in fact, has changed. My fellow-passenger was right after all. Changes for the worse or the better? In all probability I shall never know his opinion now, but in the meantime I have formed my own.

## THE SOVIETS CAN DO NO RIGHT

By A. C. THORN

**I**T is a regrettable fact that many people, otherwise fair-minded, cease to be so when discussing the affairs of Soviet Russia. Religious and political prejudice rules their minds and they are unable to distinguish good from evil. Wild generalities are indulged in and the most absurd accusations are levelled at the present Russian Administration. Comparisons are made, not between Russia of today and Czarist Russia, but between ultra-modern industrial countries and slowly awakening Russia, very much to the discredit of the Soviet system. Consequently, it is most difficult for the uninformed to learn the condition of Russia or to estimate the value of what has been done in Russia since the Revolution.

Let us consider some of the accusations made against the Soviets.

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One of the most serious charges laid against Soviet leaders is that they are breaking up the family and taking away the authority of parents over their own children. In proof of this, reference is made to the care of children in communal nurseries and state schools, and to the separation of workers from their children in factory towns and on collective farms. That children are being separated from their parents cannot be denied. In many parts of Russia working women leave their children in communal homes where they are cared for by trained nurses and attendants. The parents are free to visit the children and the children frequently visit their parents. In these communal homes the children are well cared for physically and their education proceeds according to Soviet principles.

This practice is, for the city workers and peasants of Russia, something entirely new, but it was well known in that country before the Revolution, when the children of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie spent most of their childhood and youth in educational establishments. In European and American countries also children grow up in convent schools and public boarding schools, away from the influence of their parents, and yet it is not claimed that this system destroys the family. It is only the children of the poor, in Christian countries, who live continuously at home, and it is open to doubt that their home influence is the best that could be given them. Furthermore, even before the children of our wealthy citizens go to boarding schools they pass their lives in nurseries, under the care of paid

attendants, who influence the characters of these children far more than do the parents who so rarely see them.

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The building of communal houses for workers with communal kitchens, dining rooms, libraries, reception rooms, gymnasias, lecture halls, nurseries, etc., is cited as the death blow to home life. No mention is made of the fact that each family has its own living quarters, nor is attention drawn to the tremendous saving of space, labour, fuel, food, and furniture that follows the pooling of dining-room and kitchen facilities for one hundred families. Instead of one hundred wives having each to cook three family meals every day, a small staff of trained cooks economically prepare a variety of meals that would be impossible in a hundred separate kitchens. The dish-washing problem is not that of one hundred kitchen sinks piled high three times a day with dirty dishes, but merely a question of organization with modern equipment.

When condemning Russian communal houses our own departure from private homes is forgotten. The self-contained house and flat are being displaced by apartment houses that tend to become more and more communal with their frigidaire, central heating, garbage, and elevator services, while even restaurants are being included in some of the latest buildings. Yet we hear nothing of a threat to home life when our own apartment houses are praised.

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Collectivism in industry and agriculture receives the heaviest blows from our political leaders and big business men, and we are warned of the dangers which attend any departure from our own individualist economic system. There would be, we are solemnly informed, no progress unless every individual were free to make his own way in the world; there would be no inventions, no industrial or agricultural developments if the incentive of individual profit were removed. Whether or not this be true is not the purpose of this article to answer.

What is the objective of collectivism in Russia? To secure a decent life of work, leisure, and plenty for everybody, the prevention of the exploitation of the many by a profit-sharing few, the prevention of waste through overlapping of production and distribution, the planning of work and production according to the



nation's needs, and to provide national security against unemployment, sickness, and poverty in old age.

In the highly industrialized countries which oppose so strongly Russian 'innovations' collectivism is very common. The modern tendency is towards mergers in which large business organizations combine to form gigantic corporations. We have steel trusts, shipping combines, wheat pools, and fruit growers' cooperative associations. The objective of Capitalist collectivism differs somewhat from that of Soviet collectivism. Our mergers aim at cutting down payrolls and reducing overhead costs in order to increase profits. Any benefits which might fall to the public in the form of lower prices are counter-balanced by the inevitable increase in unemployment that follows power amalgamations, pulp and paper combines, and railway mergers. Incidentally, lower prices obtain only until a monopoly is secured by one big trust.

The conditions under which people work in Russia form the subject of grave concern for those who are unable to make comparisons between Russia of today and Czarist Russia, or between Russia of today and countries hit by the Depression. The Soviets are accused of conscripting labour, of forcing everybody to work, and of insisting that 'if a man will not work, neither shall he eat'; but the reason for these drastic measures is not mentioned. Russia faces a great national emergency. Her industry and her agriculture must be built up; therefore the objective of conscription in Russia is constructive—the building of a better society. It must be remembered that conscription in Russia shows no favouritism. The whole nation is conscripted: men, women, wealth, and resources. Those who will not work lose citizenship rights, including food cards. There is no profiteering, no exorbitant salaries and wages, no huge fortunes to be made out of the nation's distress. Every citizen must share equally in the hardships if he wishes to share in the expected benefits.

Compare this form of conscription with conscription as we know it. In Canada, for instance, a Conservative Government enforced conscription to enable the country to take part in a war being fought three thousand miles away in another continent. Not one Canadian in ten knew the causes or the aims of this war, and not one half of the nation believed that Canada should fight in the war. Yet every man of fighting age, who could not wangle exemption, was taken—and here conscription stopped. Profiteering thrived and vast fortunes were piled up from the manufacture of war material. Graft was rampant and the Government was tricked continuously in contracts and in the quality of supplies and munitions. The stay-at-homes made high salaries and huge profits while the fighting men lost lives and limbs—and today, fourteen years after the end of the War, veterans are still struggling for their rights in the matter of pensions.

Both Russia and Canada believe in conscription; it is only in its application that they differ.

The Soviets are accused of cruelty to the Kulaks, the well-to-do peasants, particularly with regard to punishments inflicted for hoarding food.

In Great Britain during the War, because of the shortage of food due to the German submarine campaign, food hoarding was made a criminal offence. Individual right to buy and hoard large quantities of food was denied and yet nobody but the selfish hoarders protested against this emergency legislation.

For years after the Russian revolution there was a great shortage of food, and most stringent laws against hoarding were necessary in order to secure food for the millions in the cities.

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Perhaps the gravest charge of all those laid against the Soviets is their atheism, and their efforts to prevent Russian children from being taught religion. Prophecy after prophecy is made by churchmen that Russia must fail to make progress because of her attitude towards religion, and Soviet atheism is held to be the supreme proof of the degeneracy of Communism.

This attitude on the part of Christian nations would have much more weight with thinking men and women if it were consistently adopted towards our own atheists. Curiously enough, no word of reproach is published regarding, for instance, Sir Arthur Keith, who is acclaimed as one of the world's leading scientists. Yet he has publicly confessed that he does not believe we have a soul, but that death is the end of us. Bertrand Russell is respected on both sides of the Atlantic, and he is well known to be an atheist. H. G. Wells and G. B. Shaw believe in no religion, and are widely read by Christians who know this. H. L. Mencken attacks all religions and all priests in books and articles in which he exposes what he calls 'religious blarney', and his books circulate freely in Christian countries. His *Treatise on the Gods* is one of the most damaging books ever written about religions and their priesthoods. It is only reasonable to think that drastic action should be taken against our own atheists before condemning the mild form of atheism being taught to Russian children, which is no more anti-religious than the teachings about evolution that we so readily accept.

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The fact that many Russian churches have been converted into libraries, clubs, factories, etc., is used by critics of the Soviets as proof of the undesirability of Communism. Actually, the use for which a church is to be employed is voted upon by the people of the parish, and if a majority wish to retain the building for worship, they may do so.

Regarding the use of churches for secular purposes, Protestants can say little in condemnation of this practice, for are not their own churches used chiefly as social centres? Our churches and attached buildings and grounds are used for games, literary circles, amateur dramatics, singing instruction, social service, Guide activities, etc., while for religious services and devotion about three hours weekly are sufficient. The Russians are getting full use out of their costly churches, while we use ours very little, and then chiefly for secular purposes.

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Churchmen and laymen alike fulminate against the Soviets because of their allegedly disgracefully lax divorce and marriage laws. We are told that people can be married for fifty cents and divorced for an equally small sum, with no more formality than that of registration. Cases are cited of couples getting married at five o'clock and being divorced at five thirty the same day. We are told that no reasons are demanded by the registrar before granting a divorce, the mere desire on the part of one or both parties being considered sufficient reason.

While emphasizing the laxity of the divorce laws, in so far as concerns freeing people from the marriage tie, our critics omit to explain the protective clauses of Soviet divorce laws. A man may divorce his wife at



any time, but if she is unable to work he must support her for one year. Children of the marriage may be claimed by the mother, but the father must support them until they are eighteen years old. Likewise, a wife who divorces a sick husband must support him with a third of her earnings for one year.

While divorce is granted for trivial reasons, there can be little criticism from right-minded people of the system which enables a wife to free herself from a husband who has venereal disease. Soviet law goes further; a man who infects his wife with disease is liable to three years' imprisonment.

The Soviet point of view appears to be that as long as marriage is so easy, divorce should be equally easy, provided always that protection is secured for the children and that sick partners may not be deserted. The Soviets also believe that divorce should be available to everybody, regardless of their social, religious, or financial standing.

Conditions are not the same in our own enlightened country. Marriage is easy, tragically easy, and can be rushed through, with the aid of a Special Licence, as quickly as a Bolshevik marriage. How many tragedies are known to each one of us of married couples who, entirely unsuited to each other, during a whirlwind courtship imagined they were born for each other? And what can they do to correct their mistake? Among the rich this is a simple matter. A few months' residence in another country, the wise expenditure of a few hundreds or a few thousands of dollars for evidence, and freedom is gained. This applies equally to those of moderate means if they can afford to pay for a divorce in a Provincial Court—and collusion is seldom or never detected.

Only the poor in Canada cannot free themselves from a marriage tie that has become intolerable. Their two inadequate remedies are, legal separation (also costly to obtain) and desertion. In both cases homes are broken up and children suffer from neglect. Morally, Canadian divorce legislation is in no way superior to that of Soviet Russia, for with us it is merely a question of money. The rich in Canada can obtain divorce with or without legal cause, while the poor are deprived of their legal rights, in this matter as in every other; for the administration of the law is in the hands of those requiring huge fees for their services, and without their services nothing can be obtained from the courts.

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In conclusion, let us beware of being carried away by the unreasoned generalities which pass for criticism of the Soviet system. Many things have occurred in Russia since the overthrow of the Czar that no patriotic person would care to see happen in his own country. Class hatred caused the death of many thousands of people, and untold suffering to millions more. Destruction of property and industrial plants added to the confusion and accentuated the shortage of manufactured goods; while the repudiation of foreign obligations deprived Russia for many years of vital necessities and delayed the work of reconstruction. On the other hand, we cannot afford to ignore, or to be misinformed regarding the efforts being made in Russia to reshape the social and economic life of one hundred and sixty millions of people. Whether the Soviets succeed or fail, there is much we can learn from their experiment. In fact, our economic stability may, in the near future, be tremendously influenced by the success or failure of the Russians.

## IN PRAISE OF MR. BENNETT

MR. BENNETT, in his undoubtedly conscientious performance of a difficult task, has incurred a great deal of blame, not always well-advised. His opponents fall into two classes: on the one side, the moderates, the more numerous group, including the Parliamentary opposition and such newspapers as the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *THE CANADIAN FORUM*; on the other side, the extremists. The former indulge in much bitter criticism of his particular acts; but an increasing number of the others realize that however disadvantageous these may be to his own interests, they exemplify a general attitude that is altogether admirable.

Indeed it is not improbable that when Canadian political history is written, say a century from now, the name of Mr. Bennett will mark by far the most important development since Confederation. In foreign affairs, it is not yet certain, though highly probable, that his administration, rather than Mr. De Valera's, will mark the decisive step in the disruption of the British Commonwealth, and the final liberation of England from her Dominions. But in internal affairs, a contribution of unparalleled importance has already been made.

Mr. Bennett's supporters praise him as a man of great industry and solemnity, a man indeed who never laughs, except when he is at a loss for an argument. Even his opponents generally believe that he does his best according to his lights; in however poor condition his lights, and still more his liver, may be, his heart is in the right place. Both apparently miss the importance of his really valuable contribution to our political life.

Historians claim that no man made a greater contribution to Julius Caesar's fascist revolution than his chief opponent, the conservative leader, Pompey. This Pompey, we are told, was a man of considerable executive ability and genuine though narrow patriotism, but obstinate, weak-willed, vain, and lacking in true political insight. Ambitious of autocratic power, but incapable of seizing it violently, or wielding it effectively, he impatiently suspended the regular working of the constitution, and by peaceably centring all the powers of the state in himself, prepared the public mind for Caesar's more realistic regime. It is a commonplace of political thought that the essential safeguard of a democratic constitution lies in the absolute control of public finances by an elected representative assembly. Mr. Bennett, in transferring to the executive the effective control of tariffs, and of expenditure (the blank cheque method) has effected a peaceful revolution of incalculable importance, in comparison with which the subordination of personal liberty to what the government considers the good of the state, is almost a negligible benefit.

This obviously means that Mr. Bennett realizes, as clearly as the extreme left wing radicals, that the parliamentary regime of party government is entirely incapable of dealing with our present problems; only Mr. Bennett is in a position to do something about it, and the Reds are not. The prejudices of his early training will probably prevent him from taking the decisive step into communism that might have made him the greatest benefactor in our history; but whether Canada is destined to lapse into a form of fascism, or advance to a genuinely enlightened regime, it will owe

much to Mr. Bennett. If, as we hope, the Revolution is to be a bloodless one, it will be largely due to his pacific breaking down of the very key-stone of the old parliamentary regime. Mr. Bennett has indeed grave intellectual limitations, but the time may come—I hope in his lifetime—when it will be generally recognised that he has done the Revolution a greater service than any of us.

PRO BONO PUBLICO.

## PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL POLICY

(Official Statement of U.F.A. Executive)

**A**CTIVE cooperation with other organizations in Alberta and throughout the Dominion in constructive economic and political measures to end the present distress and to lay the foundations of a cooperative state, was offered in a manifesto adopted on Friday, June 30th, at a joint meeting of the Executives of the United Farmers and Farm Women's organizations of Alberta, the Provincial Cabinet and private U.F.A. members of the Legislature, and the U.F.A. members of the Federal House of Commons.

The manifesto is designed to form the basis of a national programme for Canada, to be realized through cooperation on a Dominion-wide scale, of organizations, both urban and rural, which are agreed upon the main outlines of the proposed national policies. Nationalization of the financial and credit system of the Dominion, and abandonment of the gold standard, are among major items in the program of ten clauses. This programme, which is based upon the decisions of successive annual conventions of the United Farmers of Alberta, has much in common with the manifesto announced some weeks ago by the League of Social Reconstruction as well as with the programme of the political Labour movement in Canada.

The conference, which was in session two days, was largely attended, almost all U.F.A. members of Parliament and the Alberta Legislature being present. The U.F.A. and U.F.W.A. Executives were present in full strength. The chair was taken alternately by Premier Brownlee and Robert Gardiner, M.P., President of the U.F.A. and chairman of the U.F.A. group at Ottawa.

The resolution, which contains in its concluding clause the definite offer of cooperation with other organizations for the purpose of realizing a specific programme, is given in full below.

Whereas, in the development of our present economic system, great weaknesses have emerged, of which the depreciation of commodity prices and the unprecedented volume of unemployment are manifestations; and

Whereas, civilization itself is thereby placed in jeopardy; and

Whereas, constructive action is now imperative for the purpose of establishing securely the foundations of the cooperative state which is the accepted objective of the U.F.A.;

We suggest, as steps to the attainment of that objective, the following programme:—

1. Nationalization of our financial and credit system, with a view to the regulation of credit and investment operations; and in particular, as immediate steps, we advocate:

(a) The abandonment of the gold standard in Canada,

(b) A well considered policy of inflation, and the devising of means to make the purchasing power in the hands of consumers at all times adequate to acquire the total goods and services available.

2. Public ownership of public utilities.

3. The acquisition or organization, either by the state or by the extension of cooperative enterprise, of those facilities and utilities incidental to the handling and processing of farm products.

4. Continued effort in and support of cooperation in all its branches.

5. Measures designed to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth, including taxation measures, especially income and inheritance taxes.

6. Adoption of a national planning policy.

7. A revision of the constitution of Canada and a re-defining of the responsibilities of federal and provincial authorities, to the end that our constitution shall be more in harmony with the economic requirements of the age.

8. While adhering to our traditional belief in freer trade between nations, we emphasize the immediate need of a recasting of our tariff policies with a view to the encouragement of our export trade and to the welfare of the primary producer and the general consumer.

9. We reaffirm our belief in a non-party system of government and the elimination of the patronage system and secret campaign funds.

10. A foreign policy designed to secure international cooperation in regulating trade, industry, and finance, and to promote disarmament and world peace.

Recognizing that these reforms can in the main be accomplished only by legislative action in the Parliament of Canada, we place ourselves on record as being willing and ready to cooperate with other organizations throughout Canada with a view to attaining the objects herein set forth.

## A V O W A L

If I have never told you truth before,

Angel, I tell it now:

Both are forsworn in most of what we swore,

And not a vow

Remains undamaged from the mordant year;

Of those inspired

And lyric dreams of yestermornings we're

A trifle tired.

Graciously now, with fond and smiling mien,

We've both withdrawn,

Grateful that this, our shining hour's been—

And gone.

JOSEPH SCHULL

## TO EMELYE (Knyghtes Tale)

Peace of the prisoned

by the bars together

brother with brother.

Why do you come?

Quiet, oh quickly

kneel on the mould;

cover your gold

behind the rose tree.

Ah, he has seen you,—

buds for your head

bright as one bloody,

pale as one dead.

ROY DANIELLS

## EDUCATION IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

By JOSEPH McCULLEY

**E**DUCATION cannot be static. Our schools must be adapted to our rapidly changing social and economic order. They should indeed preserve and pass on the heritage of past generations, but a more important function is that they should give a vision for the future in order that the problems of the new day may be faced courageously and solved intelligently.

Even the best of our schools have seemed to assume that education is a sort of preadjustment to an almost entirely 'foreseeable' life. Less efficient schools are little more than 'cram factories' doling out from day to day little parcels of heterogeneous and unrelated facts accompanied by liberal doses of all the current superstitions and taboos. (A year or so ago I was discussing with some teachers the origins of the Great War. It was evident that all of them were acquainted with those theories which did not place all the blame on the shoulders of one nation. I said to one, 'Do you discuss these matters with your classes?' 'Oh no' was the answer, 'I couldn't. I'd lose my job inside a month.' Thus was Truth made subservient to the nationalistic prejudice of a small Ontario community.)

The professional aim which has guided the schools of this province in the formulation of their curriculum has been tempered in recent years by the establishment of technical and commercial schools. Speaking generally, however, our whole system is much too stereotyped and standardized. By force of circumstances education has to be conducted in the mass and little attention can therefore be given to the task of developing individual personality. Still less attention is given to developing in students any sense of social responsibility. Surely the fundamental task of education is to develop to the utmost the capacities inherent in each individual so that he may make the greatest possible contribution to the particular society or group of which he happens to be a member. Such an objective in education was never more important than it is today. The average individual is so much a cog in the economic machine that personality, as such, has lost its value. At the same time our world has become so interdependent that we must more and more recognize the importance of a group outlook.

There have been protesting voices raised in the realm of education. Tolstoy early in his life was interested enthusiastically in the subject. 'The progress of life, of technical knowledge, of science, proceeds faster than the progress of the school and the school therefore remains more and more behind the social life and becomes ever worse and worse.' (It seems difficult to believe that this was said two generations ago.) The name of Madame Montessori as a pioneer in creative education is familiar to all students of the subject. Saunderson of Oundle endeavoured to vitalize an arid scholarship by grafting on to the work of a traditional English public school a profoundly human ideal. J. H. Badley, a young Englishman of substance, used his fortune to establish Bedales school and there for over thirty years has been offering his constructive protest against standardized education. The ideals of the 'New Education' are therefore not untested. They have been accepted by prominent educators the world over and are bound to become the

directing philosophy of education in the next twenty-five years.

It is with some hesitancy that I speak of our own experiment. In one institution, integrated as far as curriculum is concerned with a formalized state system of education, it is difficult to carry into practice to their ultimate logical conclusion all the principles outlined in my preceding article.

We believe, however, that true education cannot be conducted by the mass method. The curriculum must therefore be adapted to suit individual needs and adequate study must be made of the abilities of every boy. To this end, one member of our staff gives himself entirely to this work, and we have tried to utilize all the facilities that modern educational psychology has made available. This same member of our staff is entrusted with the task of vocational guidance. By the knowledge of individual students acquired over a period of years, and after much discussion with members of the academic staff, he is in a position to assist students in choosing somewhat more rationally their university courses or the spheres of work that they should follow.

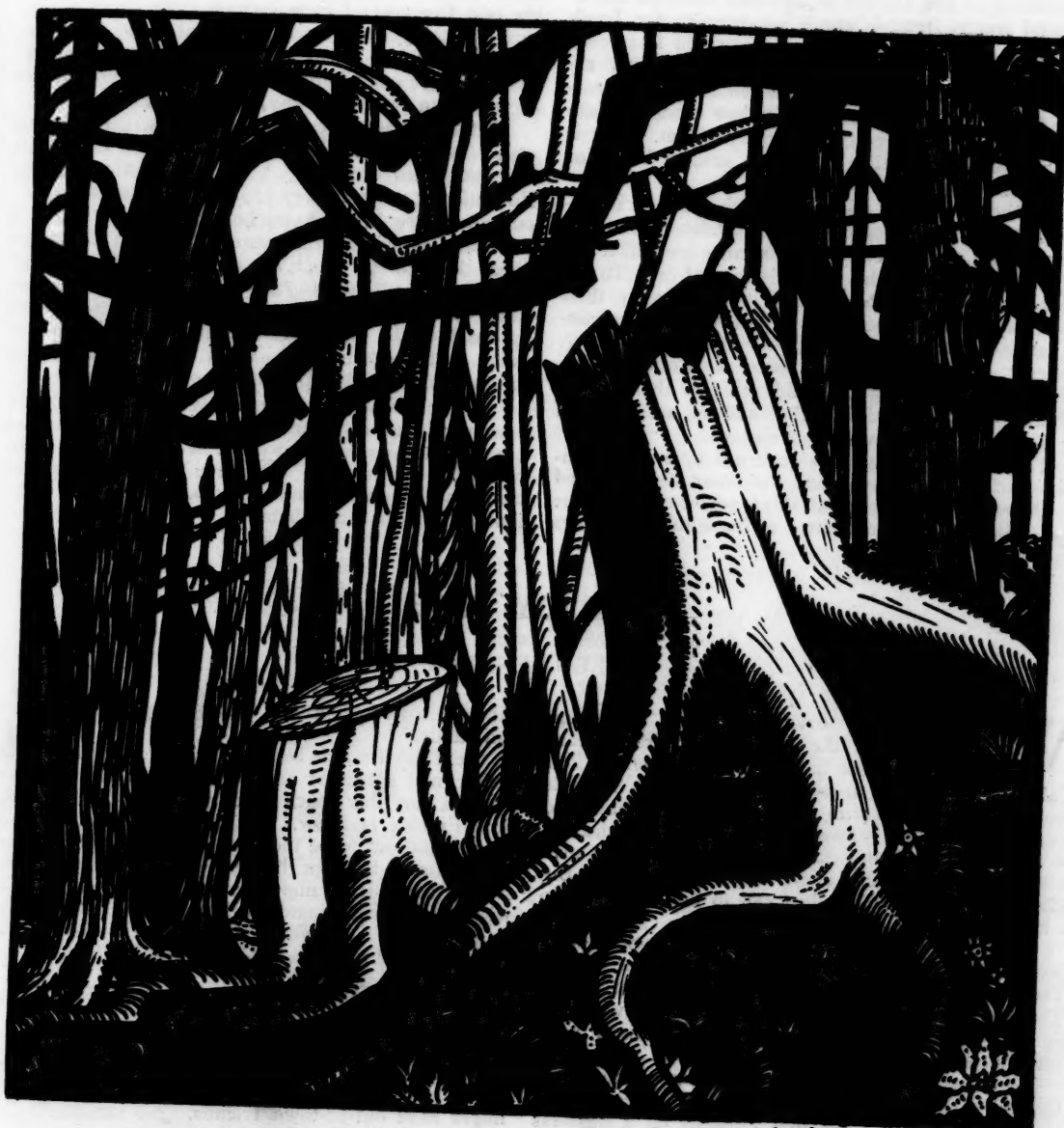
The formal instruction of the class room has been enriched by the provision of a well-equipped workshop, a studio, and the location of the school on a two-hundred-acre farm. None of these activities are 'subjects' in the ordinary sense. It was Roger Cousinet, a French inspector of schools, who said, 'We must create an environment for our children where they will find everything that is necessary for their education, so that they will be able to educate themselves without our help.' As far as our equipment is concerned this is what we have tried to do, and the real function of the teacher in these activities and under these circumstances is to stimulate and to guide the creative energy and enthusiasms of the student into productive channels.

This same purpose is further carried out by the provision of constantly changing loan exhibits of the work of Canadian artists and others, and the regular inclusion in our school library and reading-room of periodicals and books dealing with current topics — controversial though these may be at times — (the more so the better).

Throughout the whole academic year various school groups meet for discussion. These discussion groups are productive of some of the finest educational values. Masters and boys meet on a common level discussing together, with or without the assistance of some outsider, all the problems of the cosmos, ranging from theology and sociology to the questions of reparations and unemployment.

Of formal 'discipline', so-called, we have none. Formal rules and regulations are equally non-existent and 'lines', detentions, and canings have no place in a community that has completely foresworn 'fear-force' methods in education. External compliance to rules and regulations can be enforced from without, but the only real discipline is self-discipline and if a boy is to develop into a rational and self-directing adult he must learn how to choose his course of action under any given circumstances for himself. Minus his birch rod and the old-time magisterial authority of the teacher, masters win respect rather than command





Carl Schaefer, 30

# THE WOODS

By CARL SCHAEFER

it. The students, on the other hand, recognize in their teachers perfectly normal human beings whose advice and friendship are welcomed.

All this presupposes an atmosphere of real freedom — but a boy cannot learn how to make good choices unless he has such freedom. Mistakes in judgment will of course be made, but with the disappearance of the age-old antagonism between teachers and taught there is ample opportunity for frank discussion of these errors of judgment and their consequences. The normal boy is quite sufficiently rational to understand such a situation and reacts correspondingly. If an occasional student cannot fit into such a scheme he becomes a special problem, but it is not necessary to penalize the whole student body for the faults of one.

Another feature of our work which proceeds naturally from the free contact between adults and adolescents is the atmosphere of informality in which the bulk of the work of the school is carried on. To the older boys most of the masters are known by their first names. This frequently strikes some of my conservative friends as a shock. We consider it better, however, this way as an evidence of mutual friendship than that the boys should refer to the masters behind their backs as 'that old so-and-so', accompanied by a gesture expressive if not elegant.

The school community is governed by a joint committee of staff and students, the latter being elected by their fellow students at three periods during the year. Before this Committee at its regular meetings

come all problems of administration and routine, and it is quite true to say that during the course of the year there is no problem of school operation that does not come up for discussion. The fact that the student members are elected rather than being appointed by the 'Head' provides for them a real training in social controls of a democratic type. I am quite ready to admit that from the discussions in this group during the past five years I have learned more about adolescent psychology than from many text books. The existence of such a group and the frankness of its discussions have contributed more to the harmonious life of the community than any other single factor.

'Education is a creation of attitudes.' This is my own favourite definition and I have tried to indicate our method of creation. A school is not a machine. Education is not a factory process. It is rather a joyous adventure between teachers and taught. It is therefore, however, the more difficult to reduce to paper those things which are essentially 'of the spirit'. It is our hope, however, and after five years we have cause to believe it is a reasonable one, that some such approach to the task of education will enable the students to take their place, when the time comes, as rational and self-directing members of society.

In a civilization as constantly changing as ours, education must necessarily be constantly experimental (in the best sense of the word), never dogmatic, never controlled by set rules. The time has come when our common life must be built on conscious thought rather than on tradition and habit.

## THE JOY RIDE

By LEO KENNEDY

WHEN 'Dancing' Frankie Stewart, small-time trigger man of the Bronx beer circus, stood with his delicate hands in the air while Pete Salvatore's guerillas hi-jacked a particularly valuable truck load he'd been paid to guard, Frankie knew he'd have to loaf in the sticks for a while. No hideaway in the whole of Manhattan would be safe for a man who'd flopped so badly, and Frankie reflected that Big Boss Hermann wouldn't just call to talk. They'd go a nice long ride together.

So Frankie let himself be frisked, took the hi-jackers' hint to move, and hoofed it along the Jericho Turnpike in the company of his putty-faced driver. The two parted in Jamaica, saying 'So long!' with fear in their bellies. Frankie wondered to himself what Steve would maybe tell the Boss.

Anyhow, the gangster slipped obscurely into Grand Central early that morning, phoned his sleepy-voiced chorine that he was off to Cincinnati on a business trip, and took the first fast train to Montreal. He had a few hours' start and they'd hardly look for him there. He had enough money in his pants to carry him for a couple of months, and when that dribbled, he'd see for himself what a 'Bronx rod' could maybe do in Canada.

Frankie thanked his luck he had no pals in Montreal. Stepping out of Windsor Station, he bought a suitcase and a flock of linen. Then he hailed a taxi and asked to be dumped at a second-rate lodging house in the middle of the town somewhere. The driver took

him and batted a pleasant eye at being paid in American funds.

Next day Frankie bought a gun at a Jew's on Craig Street, and a box of cartridges at a hardware store. He felt just that much safer with a rod on his hip. And Frankie laid low. He kept away from what he soon found out to be the haunts of the Quebec town's underworld; he kept his nose out of cabarets and steered away from night clubs. He was going to be wise. He'd kick around till the wind had time to settle in Little Old New York, and then he'd maybe write somebody and find how healthy it was for him. Meanwhile his patience simmered.

For 'Dancing' Frankie was a playboy at heart, with a flair for the *femmes* that irked him now he had to give them turning distance. The punks he saw on St. Catherine Street looked sociable enough, but long-headed Frankie wasn't going to mix with any who might have out-of-town friends. No automatic slugs in the back for him.

He used to buy the *News* and the *Daily Mirror* and read them through from front to back. Over his coffee and hash-browned in a one-arm lunchroom (for funds were slipping) he'd follow Gotham gang activities till his stomach turned over with home-sickness. With the well stocked information docket of the inside man, he followed each move as closely and shrewdly as if he were still in the swim himself. Till one day he read how a riddled dago had been dumped from a car on a Flushing side street. That was all right, but the next

News said police photographs had identified him as one Steve Vantelli. Frankie gripped the tabloid when he saw this, and his hand shook so much he slopped his coffee. Two months since, and they'd rubbed Steve out! If they maybe laid their paws on him he'd take a death ride sure.

But a man had to eat and the town was tame, so Frankie pulled a job. A cigar store on Notre Dame Street East, with a clerk who stuck his hands up with just a grunt. The hard flicker of Frankie's eyes, and the practiced wave of Frankie's gun, made the fellow empty the till in record time. The same day he made a similar haul in the opposite end of the city. They brought enough to carry him for a while.

In the next morning paper he read of two daring holdups. Both clerks had said the gunman talked like an American, and the paper registered indignation and alarm. Were Chicago gangsters working the city; were public defenders asleep at their posts? Frankie wasn't scared of the Montreal bulls, but the publicity worried him a little. He wondered how the local boys would like his muscling in? But what he'd seen of the stick-town scum helped to ease his mind. He was keeping out of their public dives, and even if he met them, he could hold his own.

But Frankie got restless. He wanted to step out with women badly; it wasn't enough to pick up a punk now and then. Fretting and fuming in his four-by-nothing bedroom, his vanity got the better of him. He went out and bought a tux, slipped his gun into the jacket pocket, and that night sat down over a bottle in a shaded corner of the Madeline Club.

The Madeline is a dive as these things go. Sleek young Frenchmen with bulldog faces take their overdressed dolls there to drink and dance. Going in, Frankie had a bit of a turn: he saw a man he thought he recognized as a one time pal of Big Boss Hermann. The fellow looked at him pretty hard, opened his mouth and shut it again. He brushed past Frankie as a stranger would, and sat at a table with a blonde. Later when Frankie went to the washroom, he saw the blonde sitting at the table by herself. When he passed through again he saw the man was back. He didn't even look at Frankie.

Frankie got more and more liquored as the night wore on. He invited two or three stag women at different times to sit at his table, but they all turned him down. He got annoyed and grabbed the last of them, saying he wanted to dance. She put up a struggle and two young men whom he'd not seen come into the Club, came over and pushed him back in his chair.

Frankie got good and sore and said what was the big idea? One of the fellows said Rose was a good kid who didn't take up with half-shot strangers. Frankie looked at the girl and said he wasn't so sure of that. He noticed the Frenchman spoke English pretty well. While Frankie was starting to bawl them out, the fellow ordered a round of drinks.

'American, eh?' he said, 'You're just in town, yes? You don't know this place. It's a fine town for sure.' He leaned over confidentially. 'You got to know the places, and the girls, see?'

Frankie took a drink and said he wanted nothing better. The first man grinned and said that he and his friend knew them all. Frankie thought they were maybe not such bad guys, and decided to drink with them a bit. They were both grinning at *le petit Americain* with knowing airs. They cleared up the drinks and the first man ordered another round. While they

were putting these away he told Frankie a funny story about a dumb Canuck in Chicago. Frankie thought it was fine and told a story about a dumb New Englander in Quebec. They were so friendly and polite to each other it hurt.

The second man who said his name was Paul looked several times at his watch. Frankie asked him what was the rush, did he have a date with his girl? Paul said no sir, the watch didn't seem to be going so good. The other man who said his name was Joseph, said that girls were a good idea; he knew some they could call for afterwards and go for a joy ride in his car. Frankie wanted to know if they were good looking, and Joseph said, sure thing, he didn't go around with bad lookers.

Joseph said, 'Suppose we go pick up those girls now? I got a fine friend for you, Frankie. You two wait here, and I'll go get my car. It's down the block, but I'll bring it round.'

Joseph went out and while Frankie was finishing his drink, Paul got up and said he was going to the washroom.

'You finish the drink,' he said, 'and go on outside. I'll met you there, sure.'

Frankie went out of the Club alone.

He was pretty tight, and couldn't see Joseph or the car. He decided to walk down the block and save Joseph coming round to the front. He was feeling pretty good about the party and the joy ride. He went round the corner and found Joseph with the bonnet up, fooling with a flashlight and the timer. He straightened up as Frankie came along, and then Paul appeared from the other direction. He'd left the Club by the back exit.

Joseph got the car going and Paul and Frankie piled into the back seat. They drove through the thin traffic and got onto Sherbrooke Street. Paul produced a flask and gave Frankie a long drink. He had one himself.

'Where do we get these dames?' said Frankie. 'I'm ready for dames. Wheee, boys! we'll have a real party. Regular steppers, eh, Paul?'

'You betcha, sure,' said Paul. 'It'll be your best party in Montreal for certain. Ain't that so, Joseph?'

'Yes, siree,' bawled Joseph from up front, giving the car gas, 'we'll have one swell time! You're all right there, Frankie? Well, get set. Hold onto your pants. You're going to have the time of your life.'

After nearly an hour's driving Frankie got fidgety. He was too tight to think clearly, but there seemed no sign of a stop. Pressing his face against the glass he saw the open country. He looked at Joseph, but the driver had his eyes on the road. He was driving at a fast clip. Frankie looked at Paul who was sitting in the corner of the seat with his hands in his overcoat pockets. He was looking at Frankie. Frankie got a sudden chill down his back as a hazy idea struck him, and he felt for his gun. His hand rapped against an empty pocket.

Paul suddenly pressed close beside him and put a big paw round his shoulder.

'Take it easy, kid,' he said, 'it won't be long now, sure.'

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THE CANADIAN FORUM, while welcoming manuscripts of general articles, stories, and verse, is not at present paying for material.



## HELL

(In One Act)

By EDWARD ARTHUR BEDER

Characters (as they appear): A Young Man, A Young Woman, A Citizen, A Sport, The Superintendent of Hell.

Scene: A background of white drapes. Two high doors (closed) centre back stage. A semi-circular ledge in front of the doors at an elevation of two steps. Discovered Young Man seated on steps that form rim of ledge. He is quite at ease. Sprawls.

[Enter Young Woman R. She is nervous, looks around and comes forward slowly.]

YOUNG MAN (affably): Welcome to the Great Beyond.

YOUNG WOMAN (nervously): Pleased to meetcha. Is this the next world?

YOUNG MAN: There seems to be no doubt about it.

YOUNG WOMAN: It's terrible quiet here.

YOUNG MAN: Ah, it's a soothing quiet—so good for the nerves.

YOUNG WOMAN: It's so quiet.

YOUNG MAN: It's the right kind of quiet. I'm going to like it. It bears out my happiest wishes for the after life. The quietness of the grave—but without the rheumatism. Doesn't it appeal to you?

YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, it's too quiet for me.

YOUNG MAN: The suggestion of perfect peace, the utter absence of all jazz bands, can't you sense the very spirit of the hereafter?

YOUNG WOMAN: Don't talk that way. (Looks around.) Don't talk about spirits. It's so quiet here it gives me the creeps. It makes me nervous. (She loses control.) Oh, if some spirit should stretch out a skinny hand and touch me!

YOUNG MAN (rising): Nonsense, don't be afraid.

YOUNG WOMAN (commencing to weep): Oh, I'm scared. I'm scared stiff! I hate creepy things. I like noise and music and lots of people around me. It's so quiet here. Oh, if something should touch me—

YOUNG MAN (going to her): Don't cry, no one is going to hurt you. There's nothing to be afraid of in the supernatural. Be brave. It's all nonsense about spirits. What did you do on earth?

YOUNG WOMAN (tearfully): I—I was a spirit medium.

YOUNG MAN: What! Then why are you crying? What have you to fear?

YOUNG WOMAN: That's what makes me so nervous. I don't know if there are any spirits or not. I just went into that line to help out a friend. (Weeps.) Oh, I've always been scared that I'd meet a spirit who would take it out on me for faking!

YOUNG MAN (consoling): There, there. Don't worry about that. Sit down. (Seats her on rim of ledge and sits close by.) You've got nothing to worry about.

YOUNG WOMAN (still sniffs): Oh, I—don't—know.

YOUNG MAN: You're perfectly safe. There are so many more spirit mediums than there are spirits that mere numbers alone will protect you.

YOUNG WOMAN: You—can't—be—sure. (She dabs her eyes.)

YOUNG MAN: I should think you'd be more afraid of some of your old clients.

YOUNG WOMAN: Oh-h I never thought of that. No, I don't think I did them any harm. Most of them thanked me and went away happy.

YOUNG MAN: For long?

YOUNG WOMAN: How do I know? My job was to give them what they wanted and get paid for it.

YOUNG MAN: How did you come to get into such a thing? It must have been great fun.

YOUNG WOMAN: It was nice work and it wasn't hard. It got into it through a friend of mine—a Professor Rubinoff.

YOUNG MAN: Oh, a professor! What did he specialize in?

YOUNG WOMAN: Rubinoff's Rousing Elixir. A sure cure for tapeworm.

YOUNG MAN: O—oh!

YOUNG WOMAN: The professor wasn't doing very well in his own line, business was kinda slow. Then he got the idea of starting a seance parlour. So we hooked up. After a while we found we could work the both lines together.

YOUNG MAN: The two together!

YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, it was easy. When a woman came in with her little girl we gave her a cut-rate on the tapeworm remedy if she took a seance with it. Most of them did. Say, it's wonderful the way people would want to know things about their folks after they'd gone.

YOUNG MAN: And what could you say?

YOUNG WOMAN: Oh, I wouldn't tell them much. Just say Aunt Mary was well and happy but very concerned about her little niece's health, and to be sure to keep on with the same good medicine she was giving her . . . what more could I say for seventy-five cents?

YOUNG MAN: It's great. Perfect. Aunt Mary is doing well and so is the medicine. This Rubinoff must have been a genius.

YOUNG WOMAN: He treated me white. Better than a father would his own daughter. Bought me hats and shoes and dresses. Bought me candies almost every time he went out. . . . Ah, he was good to me . . . the best, the kindest man in all the world, he was, with a smile for everybody. (She sniffs.) Gentle and kind (sniff) good to everybody (sniff) poor old professor! (sobs)

YOUNG MAN: What happened to him?

YOUNG WOMAN: Poisoned.

YOUNG MAN: Poisoned!

YOUNG WOMAN: Sardines. He took a tin home one night to save me preparing a meal for him. I was going to a dance . . . gentle and kind he was, good to everybody (sob) poor old professor (weeps).

(A Citizen enters R. He is perhaps a lap past middle age. His expression is severe. He comes in quietly and immediately assumes an air of grave concern. He goes over to Young Woman.)

CITIZEN (in the Salvation manner): Ah, sister, you weep. You show repentance for your sins.

YOUNG WOMAN (resentfully): Who does?

YOUNG MAN (rising): How dare you assume that because she weeps she has sinned!

YOUNG WOMAN (rising): How dare you assume that if I sinned I should weep!

CITIZEN: Your tears shall wash your sins away.

YOUNG WOMAN: It ain't my sins, it's other peoples' sins that need washing away.

CITIZEN: Surely you seek forgiveness for your own sins on earth?

YOUNG MAN: Why should she? Doesn't sin belong to the earth just as much as coal belongs to the earth? Can you have a sinless world?

CITIZEN: Do you say the world would not be a better place without sin?

YOUNG MAN: I say the world would be no place at all without sin. It would disintegrate. It would go to pieces. The will to live is only another name for the promise of sin. We look forward to it. . . . We hope!

CITIZEN: If our sins are so desirable, why do we regret having committed them?

YOUNG MAN: Who does? Our sins are the bright memories we reserve to cheer us up on lonely evenings, when we grow weary of the struggle. They comfort us on rainy nights. I used to linger over mine when I was blue and the memory of them revived me. It reconciled me to the business of living.

YOUNG WOMAN: You were lucky. I was a good girl. I didn't have any memories to tide me over my lonely nights. I see now I shouldn't have kept away from sin so much.

CITIZEN (aroused): There is a law and it is universal. None of us can defy it and none of us can deny its workings. 'Be sure your sins will find you out.'

YOUNG MAN: Don't you see that's what she complains of—waiting for her sins to find her out. They never did. They never seemed to seek her out at all. Now I never waited for my sins to find me out, I met them half way. I took no chances on their missing me.

YOUNG WOMAN (challenging Citizen): What did you do on your bad nights?

CITIZEN: I was comforted by the thought that I had learned to resist the pleasures of the flesh.

YOUNG MAN: You call that comfort!

CITIZEN: I was comforted by the thought that I had not given way to the urge of sinful passion. I fought to preserve my moral fibre. I fought hard—a bitter fight against temptation, and I triumphed, I conquered.

YOUNG MAN: You mean you were conquered.

CITIZEN: No, I resisted.

YOUNG MAN: Pleasure isn't all you have to combat in life. You resisted pleasure, but you were conquered by religion or convention or whatever you like to call it. Now which would you say was the greater force, pleasure or religion?

CITIZEN: Religion, of course.

YOUNG MAN: You see, then, how inferior you are to me. The puny force of pleasure was all you could combat—look at my achievements. I resisted the combined attack of Propriety, Middle Class Convention, and the lure of Good Women!

CITIZEN: How can you mock me? As we are gathered here in the Unknown, uncertain of our destination, how can you voice such brazen thoughts, how can you express such vile ideas? Have you no fear?

YOUNG MAN: What is there to fear?

CITIZEN: The fear of Hell!

YOUNG WOMAN (startled): Ah!

YOUNG MAN: Nonsense, there isn't any Hell.

CITIZEN (aroused): I tell you there is a Hell. There is a burning Hell for sinners such as you! An everlasting fire whose flaming tongues roar with the everlasting pain they bring. It is the abode of the

damned. All sinners shall go there and be consumed because they did not give heed to the righteous . . . and you, with your blasphemous thoughts, will surely be consigned there. The sinner shall not escape. If he does not repent and mend his ways then shall he be destroyed. He shall be cast into the pit and the burning flames shall devour him.

YOUNG MAN: It's nonsense. There is no Hell.

YOUNG WOMAN (alarmed): Yes there is. There is a Hell . . . but it isn't a burning furnace. It's a place filled with spirits. A prison with only spirits around you poking you and giving you no rest.

CITIZEN: Hell is not a place peopled with spirits. It's a roaring furnace devouring sinners!

YOUNG WOMAN: There's only spirits in Hell!

YOUNG MAN: And I tell you that Hell is neither a stokehold nor a seance chamber. I tell you it's a superstition. It doesn't exist. It's a legend invented by Sunday School teachers. It enables them to make friends with all the pretty girls in the neighbourhood under the pretext of saving them from its consuming fires. It's a myth!

(Sounds of running feet and Sport enters from R. He is flushed and eager and cries.)

SPORT: Hell—at last!

(All turn to him.)

YOUNG WOMAN: Who are you?

CITIZEN: What do you want?

SPORT: I'm a candidate for Hell!

CITIZEN: Why do you come here?

SPORT (pointing to doors): This is the place. This is Hell.

CITIZEN: What!

YOUNG WOMAN: Who told you that?

SPORT: An old man way back in that long corridor.

CITIZEN: Where is he? It's not true!

SPORT: He's way back. As soon as he told me I was on the road to Hell—I ran all the way.

YOUNG MAN: You seem very anxious.

SPORT: Who wouldn't be? I come from the United States. It was God's own country once, but now the people have taken it over.

YOUNG MAN: And what do you expect to find in Hell?

SPORT: Don't you know what Hell is like? Hell is where all the good fellows go. It's the meeting place of the real sports. It's the home of the free spenders.

CITIZEN: Hell is a pit with devouring flames.

YOUNG WOMAN: Hell is a place filled with spirits.

YOUNG MAN (impatiently): There is no Hell.

SPORT: Aw, can that stuff. That's what they give you in the Sunday schools or the ladies' sewing circles or the barber shops. But I tell you I know. Hell is the only place left where a fellow can have a good time. It's the home of the real mixers. It's the only hope for white men . . . the earth isn't fit to live on any more.

I want a good time. It's years since I went on a spree. I want excitement and lots of licker. I'm looking for the haunts of sin and believe me you can't show me too many. Back on earth there's bands of women roaming the country on the lookout for secret smokers. Down in Texas they hung a man for carrying a cigar butt. No prayer meetings for me, no vice committees hanging on to my coat tails trying to save me—I don't want to be saved. I'm bound for Hell and a good time!

YOUNG WOMAN: Say, wouldn't it be grand—if it was true!

YOUNG MAN: Perpetual happiness.

CITIZEN: There is perpetual happiness in the kingdom of Heaven.

YOUNG MAN: But if what this fellow says is true, give me the republic of Hell.

YOUNG WOMAN: No spirits at all . . . and such good times. Just like a cabaret!

(*Sounds of key turned in lock. All look and the high doors swing open. An old man enters. He is garbed in white and his hair and beard are white. He is very grave.*)

SPORT: There's the old man!

YOUNG MAN: Who are you?

SUPERINTENDENT: I am the Superintendent of Hell.

CITIZEN: What!

SPORT: Say, what are you trying to do, kid me?

SUPERINTENDENT (*his voice is rich and full and grave*): That is the position I hold here. I am the Superintendent of Hell.

SPORT: Ain't you pretty old for the job?

SUPERINTENDENT: It suits me very well, there is nothing strenuous about it. It's just what I need. Regular hours and perfect quiet.

SPORT: In Hell!

CITIZEN: What does it mean? Is a man of my moral character to be classed with these people. It's a mistake. I protest.

SPORT: So do I. (*Points to Citizen.*) What do we want with this guy along. I'll bet he never shot craps in his life. He'll disgrace us. He won't know what to order when he gets to a bar.

YOUNG MAN: Make sure first there is a bar.

CITIZEN: Blasphemers! I tell you I resisted sin. I fought with temptation. Why should I be consumed in the burning flames with you sinners?

YOUNG WOMAN (*reacting*): He's come to change us all into spirits. I know he has! Nothing can save us now—he's going to change us into spirits!

YOUNG MAN: Won't you tell us if there is a Hell and what it is like?

SUPERINTENDENT: Certainly. How foolish are your notions of Hell, how absurd, how illogical. Your wise men on earth have proclaimed to you the existence of a Higher Power full of infinite love and mercy and having proclaimed it, they have immediately denied it.

If all the injunctions, the preachments, the doctrines, the practices, the helping hands, aye, even the tears of mankind have failed to reclaim the sinner on earth, then surely it is the privilege of this Power to manifest itself after earth. Because of this then there is a Hell. It is true the sinner shall go there, but he goes not to perish—but to be saved!

Hell is a gorgeous mission house, a vast reformatory for evil-doers. In it are assembled all the delinquents of mankind, a mighty congregation gathered together to hear proclaimed the beauties of Truth and Goodness, and where helping hands reach out to guide the sinner.

Unto the weak lessons in the development of character are given. The course is most comprehensive and covers a wide range. All the failings of mankind are reviewed and practical demonstrations are given on how to resist the lure of women, how to abstain from strong drink, how to banish immoral thoughts, how to acquire brotherly love, what young gentlemen and

young ladies should know at the age of twenty-one, and also a mathematical exposition of the odds against one in games of chance. . . . Supplementing all this there are post-graduate courses in memory training and the principles of double-entry bookkeeping.

A literary and debating society meets once a week and most animated discussions are held after the readings. . . .

SPORT: Literary and debating societies and how to abstain from strong drink! I've been swindled! I went to a revival meeting and the preacher there, an old man with gray hair he was too, swore that all the loose characters were in Hell, that it was full of night-hawks and gamblers—that it was a perpetual carnival of sin.

It ain't right for an old man like that to lead me astray, it ain't fair! It's cruel. Preachers shouldn't be allowed to make such false statements, it leads sinners along the wrong path.

YOUNG MAN (*to Citizen*): How little you knew of Hell! How you underestimated its terrors. An everlasting fire with tongues of livid flame. You see how you made light of it! Look what we are up against now!

YOUNG WOMAN: I thought it was full of spirits torturing each other—instead there's courses in book-keeping and needlework. No fun—no good times, oh, Hell's hard on a girl.

SUPERINTENDENT (*sternly*): There are no prudes in Hell. Dancing is encouraged under the careful direction of competent chaperones. We are not averse to recreation.

CITIZEN: But why am I here? I who have lived a good life. I who fought with sin and resisted temptation. Surely I did not deserve this?

SUPERINTENDENT: Because of your moral qualities, because of your virtuous life, I make you welcome. We need men like you. We are sorely in want of social workers, we are so badly understaffed. You shall have your reward. You shall have a position in the department for the Reformation of Fallen Women.

CITIZEN: Ah! (*He detaches himself from the group and proceeds on the raised ledge.*)

SPORT (*ingratiatingly*): In a department like that, supe, you need men with experience. Now I could help you a lot with fallen women—

SUPERINTENDENT (*gravely raising hand*): No.

YOUNG MAN (*eagerly*): Perhaps you have an opening for a capable demonstrator on how to resist the lure of feminine wiles?

SUPERINTENDENT (*soberly*): You are sinners. You have led sinful lives. Here you shall be made pure again. You shall enter Hell and learn new ways. You shall enter Hell and be saved.

CITIZEN (*familiarly*): Glory, you shall be saved!

SPORT: I tell you I don't want to be saved. I want damnation!

SUPERINTENDENT: My son, there is no such thing. In the afterlife there is only salvation. All that remains is Truth and Goodness.

YOUNG MAN: Behold the wages of sin!

(*Sound of singing in the distance.*)

SUPERINTENDENT: Ah, they are singing, choir practice has commenced. Please follow me.

(*Turns and opens high doors. A burst of song. "Throw out the life line, throw out the lifeline."*)

(*With a magnificent gesture.*) Come, you shall be saved. (*Exits.*)

CITIZEN (*ecstatically*): Come, you shall be saved. (*Exits.*)



(*Young Man, Sport and Young Woman posed on rim of steps.*)

SPORT (mournfully): Have I got to be saved?

(*Again a burst of song. 'Throw out the lifeline, throw out the lifeline . . .'*)

YOUNG MAN (disillusioned): We can't dodge that life line . . .

YOUNG WOMAN: I never did have any luck! . . .

(*They exit forlornly through high doors.*)

CURTAIN.



## VIII.

### HENRI BOURASSA

THE respect which M. Henri Bourassa commands almost everywhere in the province of Quebec as well as among all English-Canadians who do not take a worm's-eye view of national affairs is based on a recognition that he has a clear, complete, and tenable political philosophy. One of the chief tendencies in French-Canadian thought during the past fifteen years has been the progressive depreciation of the eloquent parliamentarians who have seen no need for such a philosophy and are content to be the phonographs of their constituents and their party. Sir Wilfrid Laurier — 'that opera-star' as M. Bourassa calls him — has perhaps suffered more from the new exigencies of Quebec than anyone else; but Laurierites like M. Rodolphe Lemieux and M. Jacques Bureau have shared in a large measure their leader's fate. And M. Bourassa, who for forty years has professed a philosophy unchanging in its essentials and preached it in the House of Commons, on platforms and in the columns of *Le Devoir*, has become a figure vastly more influential than they. You know where to have him. The war of 1914-1918 proved the rigorous consistency of his attitude: no man of our time has endured more petty gibes, more slanders, more threats of physical violence, and M. Bourassa endured them month after month, year after year, without bating a jot of his doctrine.

He has written no great book. Perhaps his life has been too packed with action and contention to allow for the long quiet incubation such a book would require. Perhaps, and it is more likely, he has not the sort of mind which expresses itself in a few matured and finished works. He has put in circulation what is more precious than a great book: an idea of capital importance traced along all its ramifications. He has defined Colonialism and he has instructed us how to purge ourselves of it. He was not the first to see the havoc wrought by Colonialism: Papineau and D'Arcy McGee, to name but two, saw its dangers and worked to forestall them. M. Bourassa has pressed his analysis further than they; he has revealed Colonialism at the bottom of many wells where its contamination was not suspected; above all he has pointed out the way of escape more effectively than anyone else.

Political Colonialism he has attacked since the outbreak of the South African War. That war, he said, concerned England and the Boer states. Not only was it possible to justify Canadian abstention from it: it was impossible to justify Canadian participation. For Canada to participate was to prove herself for the first time a militant and causelessly aggressive power. A decade later when the proposal came up that Canada should contribute to the maintenance of the British navy he spoke out again. Was Canada herself in a state of adequate defence? Could Halifax and Vancouver withstand attack? Was the Saint Lawrence fortified? Was there a satisfactory pact for mutual defence between Canada and the formidable nation to the south? To put a few watchdogs on our own doorsteps would be the best initial act for Canada as an armed power.

M. Bourassa's gift for asking unpopular questions was shown again during the European War. He wished to know whether there was ground to think that Germany was proposing to annex or invade Canada and whether there was any specific quarrel between the two states. If the right answer to these questions was No, then as a peaceable people it was our duty to remain neutral. French-Canadians were urged by their English compatriots to rush to the defence of France if they had no patriotic feeling for England. A blatant piece of special pleading, said M. Bourassa in *Le Devoir*. If England were at war with France, the English-Canadians would sing another tune. Anyhow French-Canada owed no debt to France. A Colonialist attitude toward the impious Third Republic was worse than a Colonialist attitude toward England; even the French monarchy had proved a cruel and then a neglectful step-mother to the French-Canadians. Naturally a newspaper-editor who in war-time spoke his mind with such frankness did not do so with impunity. We have our own example in J. A. Macdonald. The offices of *Le Devoir* were ravaged by a drunken mob. Once when M. Bourassa was addressing a gathering in Ottawa, soldiers in uniform broke up the meeting and, as he says, added to the crime of disorderly conduct that of insult to an allied nation when they ignorantly hissed the Marseillaise. Fifteen years later M. Bourassa's insistence that the only reasonable attitude for Canada in the domain of foreign affairs is one which asks not what the Empire wants but what is the peculiar interest and the peculiar duty of Canada seems almost commonplace. We have travelled a long way on M. Bourassa's path from colony to nation and are now in small danger of overestimating the scope of our imperial obligations or talking idly of the lioness and her whelps. A French-Canadian leader with the imperial outlook of Laurier is now inconceivable.

The subtler menace of social and moral Colonialism is what besets us today. Sixty years ago William Dean Howells, who knew Canada extraordinarily well, remarked:—

The constant reference of local hopes to that remote centre beyond the seas, the test of success by the criterions of a necessarily different civilization, the social and intellectual dependence implied by traits that meet the most hurried glance in the Dominion, give an effect of meanness to the whole fabric.

Howells had English-Canada in mind when he drafted that comment: and even today English-Canada is with-

out a distinctive culture or civilization and almost entirely ignorant of the nascent culture and civilization of Quebec. Some of our traits we describe, when we encounter them in the man across the way, as English, others as American. We should be hard pressed if a visitant from Sirius were to ask us to name some trait which was neither English nor American. If we succeeded it too would be derivative—our Scottish attitude towards the Sabbath, for example. Professor Norman Rogers in his review of Professor Brady's *Canada* stated that our culture could be authentic even if imitative; and in such a statement he represents almost the whole of English-Canada. Surely this is to rob the idea of authenticity of all meaning. What in Professor Rogers' view is a spurious culture?

Now the French Canadians have gone far beyond us in the development of an indigenous culture. There is a discernible cohesion between the sermons of the patriotic clergy, the articles of the political philosophers grouped about the Abbe Lionel Groulx and the *Librairie d'Action Francaise*, the linguistic purists of Laval and the authors of sketches and novels of the *terroir*. M. Bourassa, along with the Abbe Groulx, M. Edouard Montpetit, and Canon Emile Chartier, has striven to harmonize and unify the particular activities and aims of such varying groups as those mentioned. Besides he is an effective policeman: he has his eye on the renegades who from snobbery or sycophancy or the desire for great wealth betray the French-Canadian cause and go over to the English society of Montreal and Ottawa.

Most English-Canadians fail to distinguish between the political philosophy of the Abbe Groulx and that of M. Bourassa. The distinction is fundamental. As I pointed out in a paper published in *THE CANADIAN FORUM* for October 1929, the political ideal of the Abbe Groulx is a French-speaking republic on the banks of the Saint Lawrence. That ideal M. Bourassa has always opposed. Such a republic, he says, would stand to Anglo-Saxon North America in about the position in which Monaco stands to France. Moreover, to achieve it Quebec would be obliged to break faith with the French-Canadian settlements in Ontario and the western provinces. M. Bourassa prefers

to accept the Canadian Confederation as the permanent frame for French-Canadian destinies. The Abbe Groulx once complained that certain French-Canadians had adopted 'a too broadly Canadian patriotism' merging the loyalty due to the race in loyalty to a shadowy nationality. M. Bourassa is disposed to be as broadly Canadian as English-Canadians will allow him; and when one reads the reports of his speeches in the House of Commons with the frequent and fatuous interruptions of Ontario Orangemen one is grateful for his longanimity.

At one point even the most tolerant English-Canadian will properly reject M. Bourassa's political philosophy; and it is a point on which M. Bourassa would never compromise. He is not merely a devout Catholic, but a clerical as violent as Louis Veillot; and it is difficult to conceive of a clericalist philosophy shaping a nation in which Catholicism is not the religion of an overwhelming majority. Clericalism has been one of the stumbling-blocks in the way toward national unity in France and Germany; and M. Bourassa gives us no reason to think that it would be less of a peril in Canada. While I am in the chapter of reproaches, let me implore M. Bourassa not to charge English-Canada with '*matérialisme*': the first desideratum in an indictment is that the person indicted should understand it; and there is probably not one English-Canadian who has the least glimmer of what the French-Canadians means when they use that conveniently comprehensive word. They use it so often they should pay it extra.

It was one of Lowell's soundest generalizations that before there could be an American literature there must be an American criticism. If he had had the shameless honesty of Bernard Shaw, he would have said that what America needed was as many Lowells as she could stand. That is exactly what we in Canada need today. Goldwin Smith is the nearest to this type of critic that English-Canada has come; Henri Bourassa comes nearer to it than any other French-Canadian. It is a pity that French-Canada has profited so little from the first of these masters and English-Canada so little from the second.

E. K. BROWN

## SOIREE OF VELVEL KLEINBURGER

By ABRAHAM M. KLEIN

In back-room dens of delicatessen stores,  
In curtained parlours of garrulous barber-shops,  
While the rest of the world most comfortably snores  
On mattresses, or on more fleshly props,  
My brother Velvel vigils in the night,  
Not as he did last night with two French whores,  
But with a deck of cards that once were white. . .

He sees three wan ghosts, as the thick smoke fades  
Dealing him clubs and diamonds, hearts and spades. . .

His fingers, pricked with a tailor's needle, draw  
The well-thumbed cards; while Hope weighs down  
his jaw.

O for the ten spade in its proper place,  
Followed by knave in linen lace,  
The queen with her gaunt face,

The king and mace,  
The ace! . . .

Alas, that Velvel's sigh makes eddies in the smoke.  
For what's the use?  
While the pale faces grin, his brow is hot:  
He grasps a deuce. . .

*A nicotine hand beyond the smoke sweeps off the pot.*

O good my brother, should one come to you  
And knock upon the door at mid of night  
And show you, writ in scripture, black on white,  
That this is no way for a man to do? —  
What a pale laughter from these ghosts, and 'Who  
Are you, my saint, to show us what is right?  
Make a fifth hand, and we will be contrite;  
Shuffle the cards, be sociable, Reb Jew.'

Then Velvel adds a foot-note to his hoax:  
I will not have your wherefores and your buts;  
For I am for the Joker and his jokes;  
I laugh at your alases and tut-tuts,  
My days, they vanish into circular smokes,  
My life lies on a tray of cigarette-butts. . .

For it is easy to send pulpit wind  
From bellies sumptuously lined;  
Easy to praise the sleep of the righteous, when  
The righteous sleep on cushions ten,  
And having risen from a well-fed wife  
Easy it is to give advice on life. . .  
But you who upon sated palates clack a moral,  
And pick a sermon from between your teeth,  
Tell me with what bay, tell me with what laurel  
Shall I entwine the heaven-praising wreath,  
I, with whom Deity sets out to quarrel?

*But prithee, wherefore these thumbed cards?*

O do not make a pack of cards your thesis  
And frame no lesson on a house of cards  
Where diamonds go lustreless, and hearts go broken  
And clubs do batter the skull to little shards,  
And where, because the spade is trump  
One must perforce kiss Satan's rump. . .

For I have heard these things from teachers  
With dirty beards and hungry features. . .

Now, after days in dusty factories,  
Among machines that manufacture madness  
I have no stomach for these subtleties  
About rewards and everlasting gladness;  
And having met your over-rated dawns,  
Together with milkmen watering their milk,  
And having trickled sweat, according to a scale of  
wages,  
Sewing buttons to warm the navels of your business  
sages,  
I have brought home at dusk,  
My several bones, my much-flailed husk. . .

My meals are grand,  
When supper comes  
I feed on canned  
Aquariums.

The salmon dies.  
The evening waits  
As I catch flies  
From unwashed plates.

And my true love,  
She combs and combs,  
The lice from off  
My children's domes. . .

Such is the idyll of my life.  
But I will yet achieve  
An easier living and less scrawny wife  
And not forever will the foreman have  
The aces up his sleeve,  
But some day I will place the lucky bet.  
(Ho! Ho! the social revolutions on a table of  
roulette!)

My brother's gesture snaps: *I spoke.*  
His cheeks seek refuge in his mouth.  
His nostrils puff superior smoke.  
His lips are brown with drouth.

Hum a hymn of sixpence,  
A tableful of cards  
Fingers slowly shuffling  
Ambiguous rewards.  
When the deck is opened  
The pauper once more gave  
His foes the kings and aces  
And took himself the knave.

Once more he cuts the cards, and dreams his dream:  
A Rolls-Royce hums within his brain;  
Before it stands a chauffeur, tipping his hat,  
'You say that it will rain, Sir; it will rain!'  
Upon his fingers diamonds gleam,  
His wife wears gowns of ultra-Paris fashion,  
And she boasts jewels as large as wondrous eyes  
The eyes of Og, the giant-king of Bashan.

So Velvel dreams; dreaming, he rises, and  
Buttons his coat, coughs in his raised lapel,  
Gropes his way home; he rings a raucous bell.

## LIBRARY TRAGEDIES

IT is only a few minutes past nine, but the reading rooms are already almost full. There are men who come as punctually to the library as those who are on a paid schedule. Some of them are in the eventide of life and seek only a pleasant nook to while away an hour. But most of them are in the prime of life, men in the various stages of seediness to which unemployment reduces a human being. The staff are so busy with the added demands the present conditions have brought, that we have not very much time to observe the interesting types that gather about the tables, but perhaps it is just as well, for a glance is sufficient to sadden our hearts at the hopelessness of their attitude and our inability to do anything to relieve it. And so they come and go, and we can only surmise the tragedy that lies behind each patient figure.

Occasionally, however, we stumble on a story that brings one or another of our customers sharply into the foreground. Last January a certain reader did not return his books on the due date. The regular notices were sent to him but he paid no attention, so our overdue messenger was sent out to collect the books. He found the tiny home on the outskirts of the city, and knocked, but no one came. Anxious to do his duty, he tried the door and finding it unlocked, stepped into the room, but a chill of foreboding made him withdraw, and he came back without the books. In the meantime, the wife of the man, who had been out in the country trying to earn a little to keep the home together, became anxious at not hearing from her husband and asked the police to investigate. They found the man lying on a couch in the inner room dead. He had evidently been dead three or four weeks. Although it was bitter weather, the gas had been shut off from headquarters, and the only heat he had had came from



a tiny electric stove. There was no food in the house, and although the result of the inquest was not given much publicity, it was whispered about that he had died of starvation. He was a cultured gentleman of the old school and could not bring himself to ask for relief, preferring to starve in a genteel manner. Beside the dead man's couch was a library book with a marker in it, showing that he had read several chapters before he died.

Not long ago we received a telephone call from a rooming house to say that there was a library book there called *A Woman is Dead*. We asked them who had borrowed the book, and they replied, relishing the grim coincidence, 'The woman is dead.' She was a little elderly lady living all alone in a tiny, bare room, and the frail thread of her life had snapped as she pored over this modern mystery story with its gruesome title. Like the heroine of Hood's 'Bridge of Sighs' it might have been said of her:—

Oh, it was pitiful  
Near a whole citiful  
Friends she had none.

The membership card in the library book was the coroner's only means of identification. Her visits to the library had probably supplied the only bit of colour in her life, but she had gone her way so inconspicuously among us, that not one of us could remember her.

Some months ago a workman in the city committed suicide. The day after the funeral, his wife brought in a library book which he had borrowed. It was the first and last book he had ever taken out, and he had evidently joined the library expressly to obtain it. It was called *Fear* and the corner of one page had been turned down. I read it even as I shuddered. It described the way in which fear sometimes prompts a man to take his own life, giving in a graphic way the impulses leading to the rash act, and the arguments against it. I learned later that the poor suicide had been suffering for some time from a very painful disease which was not fatal, but which he feared would incapacitate him for his work, which required considerable physical strength. Fear of losing his job became an obsession with him and filled him with a morbid dread. It is probable that someone had recommended this book to him hoping it would help to dispel his fears. He had read on till he reached this page with its fatal suggestion which proved too strong for him.

All tragedies, however, do not end in death, and just the other day I saw a simple tragedy enacted that brought as great an ache to my heart as would a performance of a Greek tragedy. It occurred in the Reference Room where pamphlet collections on various subjects are kept. A lad not more than twenty was sitting at the table. He was evidently a 'foreigner' and quite as evidently unemployed. His dark hair had grown long and bushy and appeared matted and dirty. His coat had, by all appearances, been slept in for many nights. Yet in spite of all his disreputable appearance, he was quite obviously a boy of breeding and education. He had got hold of a box containing folders and guides of various Railways and Steamship Lines, and had opened one with a picture of a ship on the cover. This folder listed the rates to different countries in Europe, and gave a map with the routes marked. The poor lad had probably not enough money to buy a meal or get his hair cut, but he sat all morning and far into the afternoon staring at that ship; and at

the dotted lines that ran across the blue ocean map. Others went out for their midday meal, but he continued to stare with sombre young eyes at the folder in front of him. Was it a vision of home and mother he saw at the end of that dotted line? It must have been, but the rates, though moderate as such things go, might as well have been a million dollars so far as he was concerned. Late in the afternoon he got up and went out quietly, but somehow my eyes were too blurred to see him clearly.

GEORGINA H. THOMSON.



### THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY

AFTER THE DELUGE, a Study of Communal Psychology, Vol. I., by Leonard Woolf (Hogarth Press; pp. 347; 15/-).

LEONARD WOOLF is one of the most brilliant and suggestive critics of the social and political tendencies of our modern civilization. Any book or book review of his will be picked up with eager interest by the discerning reader. For he is one of those now rare individuals, a thinker who belongs definitely to the left wing but who has refused to take refuge from the baffling perplexity of our times by flying to the panacea of dogma. This book, like everything he writes, is full of suggestive and illuminating passages. It is an analysis of the idea of democracy as it has affected the communal psychology of Western Europe in the past century and a half. He is an expert at dissecting particular men as types of a general social phenomenon; and his analysis of Burke's reaction to the equalitarian ideas of the French revolution, or of Matthew Arnold's authoritarian mysticism, or Sir John Fortescue's democratic indignation at the General Strike, are delightful. The book in fact is packed with shrewd observations about the way in which men have thought and felt about happiness, liberty, and equality since the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the way in which their thoughts and feelings have influenced their actions.

At the same time Mr. Woolf is somewhat disappointing because no very clear plan emerges out of his discussions. This is partly because this volume is merely a sort of prolegomena to a much more ambitious work which will seek to analyze the whole economic and political psychology of the society which ended with a crash in the Great War. But the confused feeling with which the reader is left is also due to the fact that this Volume I is written like one of Mr. Shaw's prefaces; it is brilliant conversation set down in print, witty and stimulating; but, like all conversation, full of digressions, careless of sequence, lingering long over some points and skimming lightly over others.

Briefly the plan of Mr. Woolf's work is this. The War was a great historical catastrophe, a Deluge which swept away one epoch of civilization and inaugurates another. We who are living now after the deluge should receive some guidance from our historians as to the significance of the catastrophe through which we have come and as to how it resulted from the so-

cial complex of the pre-war generation. The War must have arisen from a mass of ideas, feelings, and aspirations in the minds of the generation which experienced it. Mr. Woolf's purpose is to make an historical analysis of the development of this communal psychology so as to bring out what were the fundamental social ideas of pre-war society.

Investigating the War, he finds that the causes for which men said they were fighting — freedom, nationality, democracy — bear a remarkable resemblance to the ideas which in the eighteenth century seemed to the men of those days a legitimate cause of the Revolutionary wars — liberty, equality, fraternity. 'If historians, statesmen and ordinary men are right in diagnosing their own psychology, the death rate from liberty and equality has been far higher in Europe during the last one hundred and fifty years than from cholera, and no disease can compete in destructiveness with the idea of nationality'. So he goes back to the eighteenth century to analyze the social psychology of pre-revolutionary France and England; and he finds that a new way of regarding the distribution of human happiness was beginning to permeate men's minds, that this new attitude was incompatible with the social structure of the time and so produced an explosion. The fundamental change in the eighteenth century was a growth in this belief in the democratization of happiness. This carried with it new conceptions about equality and liberty. And the bulk of Mr. Woolf's volume is taken up with a discussion of these three ideas of democracy, equality, and liberty in the social thinking of Western Europe.

What interests Mr. Woolf is not the formal presentation of these ideas in the classical writers, but the way in which the ideas were held in the minds of ordinary men. He traces how a slow and unconscious change in the general attitude towards communal happiness, a change which is connected with an increasing sense of individuality, emerges through the eighteenth century, and how this general diffused attitude gradually breaks up and condenses like a nebula into various social theories and movements — humanitarianism, natural rights, utilitarianism, etc. 'The primary doctrine of early democrats was that government should be based on a social right to equal happiness and therefore upon a common purpose or social contract to pursue the common benefit of all the citizens.' How this attitude undermined the institutions of the eighteenth century in which happiness was a graded commodity and a man's access to it depended upon his membership in a class; and how, as the nineteenth century drew to its close, there grew up in turn a new anti-democratic authoritarian attitude, of which patriotism, nationalism, and imperialism are exemplifications, is the theme of Mr. Woolf's study. 'The new attitude is an unconscious attempt of the human mind to get rid of the new and disturbing consciousness of individuality which caused the psychological revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.'

Mr. Woolf's study has two great blanks in it. One is the absence of any attention to economic ideas and institutions and their reaction upon the ideas of democracy, equality, and liberty. This omission is deliberate; he intends to take up economic ideas in a later volume of his work. The other omission appears to be unconscious. There is hardly any mention in the whole volume of American history after 1783. The example of the transatlantic republic with its prac-

tical demonstration of a democratic society had a profound effect upon European thinking all through the nineteenth century. To study the ideas of democracy, equality, and liberty in that century without including the United States in one's survey is like putting on the play of Hamlet without including the Prince of Denmark.

FRANK H. UNDERHILL

### THE BRONTE MYTH

CHARLOTTE BRONTE, by E. F. Benson (Longmans, Green and Co.; pp. 313; \$4.00).

WHEN Queen Victoria and her 'dear Angel' were in Brussels on their first visit to Uncle Leopold after their marriage, it happened, Mr. Strachey tells us, 'that a still more remarkable Englishwoman was in the Belgian Capital, but she was not remarked; and Queen Victoria passed unknowing before the steady gaze of one of the mistresses in M. Heger's pensionnat. "A little, stout, vivacious lady, very plainly dressed — not much dignity or pretension about her", was Charlotte Brontë's comment as the royal carriage and six flashed by her, making her wait on the pavement for a moment, and interrupting the train of her reflections.' The lady on foot, three years older than her Sovereign, was also little but not stout, plainly dressed but not vivacious. She had no angel by her side and she was tormented by demons within. For with ideas of duty and morality not unlike the Queen's and with a similar vein of iron in her character, she found herself desperately in love with another woman's husband. 'Une grande passion is une grande folie', she had warned her friend Ellen Nussey. Now she herself was in the toils of a mad passion for a man many years her senior whom she had described to the same Ellen as 'a little black being with a face that varies in expression. Sometimes he borrows the lineaments of an insane tom-cat, sometimes those of a delirious hyena.' This was the strange destiny that drove the prudish and puritanical spinster of the Yorkshire parsonage to publish four years before the Great Exhibition a novel which profoundly shocked while it fascinated an England already Victorian. It was from this deep emotional experience too that Charlotte Brontë's best and noblest work sprang, for, says Mr. Benson, 'there can be no doubt that without it *Villette* would never have been written'.

Yet Mrs. Gaskell, her official biographer, fully cognizant of the whole affair as Mr. Benson shows, deliberately suppressed it. For two years after her return to the dismal moors Charlotte continued to write to M. Héger impassioned and imploring letters which were decorously answered at his dictation by Mme. Héger in her usual capacity of amanuensis. Four of Charlotte's letters, rescued from the waste-paper basket and very properly preserved by Madame against possible contingencies, were read by Mrs. Gaskell who made judicious extracts and invented a reason for Mme. Héger's coldness. 'Some biographers, no doubt, if this decision had been presented to them would have abandoned their work altogether, sooner than falsify its essential truth by such an omission; Mrs. Gaskell thought otherwise, and having formed her loyal and admiring conception of the figure she wished to present, scrapped (with or without compunction) what she knew was of first-rate importance for a faithful portrait.' Although this is the most egregious falsifi-



cation in her celebrated and in many ways admirable *Life*, it is by no means the only one; she has to be reckoned with at every turn. Her motives were doubtless as pure as Ruskin's when he destroyed the Turner drawings. These peculiarly high-handed rectifications of divine obliquities are characteristic of extreme varieties of anthropomorphism. They provide much of the raw material for the debunking industry.

Although some of the more intelligent Brontë students, knowing how Charlotte used every possible scrap of personal experience in her books, conjectured that Lucy Snowe's passionate devotion to her teacher, Paul Emmanuel, (in *Villette*) was a fictional but faithful transcript of Charlotte's feelings for M. Héger their theories were ridiculed by her champions, who 'felt it to be a monstrous outrage that she should be suspected of having fallen in love with a married man. . . . They proved to their own satisfaction that not only was there no evidence to support so malevolent a notion, but that anyone who knew anything about Charlotte's puritanical uprightness must have known also that she was incapable of such a spontaneous surrender, and they proved it by a hurricane of arguments that swept all before it. Then, nearly sixty years after her death, came the conclusive evidence that all they had proved to be false was perfectly true.' The letters are now in the British Museum.

The Brontë myth, then, is preponderantly of Mrs. Gaskell's creation. Mr. Benson, himself a novelist, quotes a remark made to him by the late Sir Edmund Gosse: 'Nobody but a novelist should be allowed to write a biography, but he must remember that he is not now writing a novel.' 'It must be confessed,' he adds, 'that Mrs. Gaskell was terribly forgetful of that.' The Rev. Patrick Brontë, at whose request Mrs. Gaskell undertook the writing of his daughter's biography, furnished her with a few mild fictions to start with about the ancient Brontës of County Down (his father was Hugh Brunty, peasant farmer), but was furious when Mrs. Gaskell's amusing anecdotes, gleaned from village gossips, of his own violent outbursts of temper were read to him by his son-in-law. He wrote her an indignant letter. How the old man would have reacted to the truth about his daughter is almost beyond conjecture. Mrs. Gaskell was too busy with the libel actions brought against her in consequence of other parts of the book to reply, but she omitted all these sensational and unfounded stories from the third edition. Later scholars, however, have clung to her (apocryphal) fictions disinterring them from her unexpurgated editions and even elaborating on them. So the myth has grown and flourished.

With the appalling example of Mrs. Gaskell so constantly before him, Mr. Benson has kept a tight rein on his imagination. His brief flights are carefully documented. He acknowledges a large debt to the patient research of Mr. Clement Shorter upon whose authoritative volumes he has based his work. The only point of importance upon which he differs from Mr. Shorter is regarding Emily Brontë's attitude towards her brother, Branwell. Charlotte, who had no indulgence for herself, had none for Branwell, the pious Anne used him as a model for the drunken Huntingdon in the Tenant of Wildfell Hall, but Emily, always 'full of ruth for others' pitied him, Mr. Benson believes, to the last. Branwell's contribution to *Wuthering Heights*, he concludes after a careful examination, was actual but slight. Mr. Benson pays

frequent tribute throughout the book to the supreme genius of Emily Brontë, but whereas the biographer of Charlotte has merely to let her speak for herself the biographer of Emily is faced with an impenetrable wall of reserve. Of Charlotte Mr. Benson remarks: 'Her letters . . . sometimes pungent and censorious, sometimes elderly and hortatory, sometimes child-like and brimming with eager enthusiasm and sly ironies, paint her own portrait with a vividness and a fidelity that no biographer can hope to rival, and one is tempted to believe that had she never written anything whatever except letters, she would have won through them a niche in English literature at least as permanent as Horace Walpole's.' But Emily maintains her 'steely remoteness'. Attempts have been and will be made to plumb the depths of her profoundly mystic genius, but the definiteness that is possible in the case of the older and less gifted sister will never be possible with the creator of Heathcliff. Charlotte's complete and inevitable failure to comprehend Emily's wild spirit is painfully obvious: 'I should say Ellis will not be seen in his full strength till he is seen as an essayist', she writes apologetically. With Mr. Benson one 'vainly and impotently wonders what sort of essay it would be and on what subject, that would reveal the full strength of Emily Brontë which *Wuthering Heights* only partially disclosed'.

It would be difficult to write a dull book on the Brontës. Mr. Benson has written a very interesting one. Nor is the tale all gloom. The first polite call of the Messrs. Currer and Acton Bell upon Messrs. Smith, Elder, their London publishers, . . . provide an excellent comedy scene should the dramatic possibilities of the Brontë-Saga ever be realized on the stage. What a portrayal Helen Hayes could give of the timid and shrinking yet fiery Charlotte being lionized in literary London! What a delight to see her taking her idol, Mr. Thackeray, to task: 'The giant sat before me: I was moved to speak to him of some of his shortcomings (literary, of course); one by one the faults came into my mind, and one by one I brought them out, and sought some explanation or defence. He did defend himself like a great Turk and heathen; that is to say the excuses were often worse than the crime itself. The matter ended in decent amity; if all be well I am to dine at his house this evening.' And the dinner, as described by Lady Ritchie, with Miss Brontë 'in mittens, in silence, in seriousness', tiny and hardly reaching up to Thackeray's elbow! Mrs. Crowe, the Carlyles, Mrs. Proctor with Barry Cornwall and Adelaide Anne were all there primed for a brilliant discussion of *Jane Eyre*: "Do you like London, Miss Brontë?" . . . a silence, a pause, then Miss Brontë answered, "Yes and no," very gravely. . . .

If there is not very much that is new to the Brontë student in his book, Mr. Benson has nevertheless given in short space a clear and unbiassed account of the family. Although Charlotte is the subject of his biography, he is not a Charlotte-ite, and the story of Charlotte Brontë loses nothing in pathos and poignancy when told without special pleading.

J. B. C. WATKINS

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## THE ODYSSEY

THE ODYSSEY, translated in verse by J. W. Mackail (Oxford University Press; pp. 513; \$5.50).

IT IS to be hoped that translations of the Odyssey will never fail. Greek will probably never again be more than the privilege of a happy few; but the Odyssey, even more than the Iliad, must remain the heritage of the civilized world. It cannot be expected that any final and definitive English translation will ever be reached: there is need successively for a Chapman, a Pope, a Butler, a Butler and Lang, a Mackail.

It is safe to say that no translator is likely to achieve a more delicate and scrupulous accuracy than Mr. Mackail, and it is unlikely that our understanding of the poems and the life they portray will make again such strides as it has made between Pope's time and ours. The problem of how best to recapture the purely poetic merits, will perhaps never be solved.

The metre Mr. Mackail has chosen is a succession of rhymed quatrains of the type Fitzgerald used in his *Rubaiyat*. This form was however chosen independently, and is written with an easy continuity that is never in the slightest degree reminiscent of the detached quatrains of Fitzgerald. The author it does recall is William Morris, and so strongly that one reads on and on looking for 'the water wan' — and incidentally not finding it, for the adequate reason that it is not in Homer. The general effect is to produce a definite romantic colouring; which is well in place, for the Odyssey, in contrast to the Iliad, is a thoroughly, almost strangely romantic tale, both in substance and in manner. It is not the Volsung Morris of Morris' own translation that is suggested, but the Morris of the *Life and Death of Jason*, a much more appropriate style. Magnificent as the wide sweep of the Volsung metre is for that story, it feels too loose and almost baggy for the Odyssey. The close, accurate rapidity of Mr. Mackail's version reproduces much more of the effect of the original. For the romance of the Odyssey has not the remote Northern vagueness that makes all Morris' figures move dimmed and ominous, looming larger than human through the mist; its language has not his broad low-banked flow, the melancholy insistence that seems, like the entry to Vergil's underworld, to take away all colour from things. Samuel Butler was not wrong in stressing its clarity, its directness, its almost familiar and realistic actuality; and this quality Mr. Mackail achieves. It is true that there are resonant and memorable lines of the Odyssey for which one will look in vain; here Morris rather scores, but no translation could fully satisfy that demand. In general, this version in comparison with other poetic renderings may surprise at first sight by its simplicity; we have been so drugged with atmospheric adjectives and adverbs that it may seem almost bare: but that is the measure of its success rather than its failure.

As Mr. Mackail says, 'the first requirement in any translation of Homer is that it should carry the reader on'. His translation sustains even the appropriate test of being read aloud. The balance between simplicity and richness is well kept; indeed it is perhaps about as near the Odyssey as anything that is not the Odyssey is likely to be; for Mr. Mackail has not only a scholarly but an intimately poetic knowledge of the poem. It is a loving and discriminating taste that judges, 'It is not the surge and thunder of the Odyssey that is the final impression left by long acquaint-

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tance, but rather its quiet magnificence, such a tide as moving seems asleep, too full for sound or foam'.

L. A. MacKAY

### THE GREAT OPEN SPACES

THE LONG RIFLE, by Stewart Edward White (Doubleday, Doran & Gundy; pp. 536; \$2.50).

STEWART EDWARD WHITE writes with enthusiasm and authority of the Great Open Spaces and of men who, in physique at least, were supermen. *The Long Rifle* adds another chapter to the saga of the frontier which its author is building up. It retails the adventures of one Andrew Burnett as fur trapper in the west between 1810 and 1850, before the era of the covered wagon. Fact and fiction rub shoulders. Daniel Boone, whose adventurous career the author has recorded in another book, appears in this one as the original owner of the Long Rifle, which, passing as an heirloom to Andrew Burnett, gives the story its title. It is, in reality, a symbol, for, as Boone blazed the trail into Kentucky, so did Burnett and his kind across the Rockies, anticipating the route of Lewis and Clarke, and the overland trail of the Forty-Niners.

The book is an absorbing one, less a novel than a chronicle. There is no plot worth mentioning, and none of the 'love interest' which caused the author such exquisite discomfort in some of the other novels. The simple chronological arrangement of material shows Mr. White at his best. It mercifully conceals deficiencies in craftsmanship, and gives full scope to the author's flair for reconstructing the more colourful episodes of American history. Mr. White's gift for bringing history to life, and his passionate admiration for the hardy breed of men who led the advance westwards are backed by a first-hand knowledge of woodcraft, and by careful investigation of all available historical material. *The Long Rifle* offers a wealth of information, in palatable form, on the ways of the trappers and Indians of the period. The author's note is scarcely required to convince one of the authenticity of his facts. He writes: 'Necessarily, in the compilation of this story I have consulted and used material from a great many works dealing with the time, one hundred and twenty-three of them to be exact. The list runs through trappers' journals and memoirs; books of contemporary travelers and chroniclers; the more careful compilations of later historians.'

Only occasionally, as in the detailed description of the Rifle in the Prologue, does Mr. White's zeal betray him into tediousness, and the accuracy of his facts, save for 'a slight wrench in chronology', makes the book valuable as well as interesting. It is intensely American — one notes with interest the rather acid tone that creeps in when the English methods of dealing with the Indians are mentioned, but in the end the book makes one wonder why the mass of similar material on Canadian history has not been further exploited. Somewhere between historical accounts such as those of Agnes Laut, the inaccuracies of Sir Gilbert Parker and the sophistication of Willa Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* a middle path might be found. This hybrid of novel and biography requires no giant intellect for its creation, and makes excellent reading. It is not an inspired type of literature, perhaps, but more solid than much that we are offered by that name.

M. A. CAMPBELL

### MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN

MINER, by F. C. Boden (J. M. Dent & Sons; pp. 203; \$1.75).

HERE could be no more trenchant indictment of our industrial system than that the year 1932 should have witnessed the publication of two such novels as James Hanley's *Boy*, a story of shipyards and shipping, and Frederick Boden's *Miner*. We have learned to look with horror on the days when Dickens upbraided Society for its crimes against the helpless, but we need not congratulate ourselves on being more enlightened. Are we in any less a 'muddle' than when Stephen Blackpool was taken out of Old Hell Shaft?

*And remembrance shall take thee and fret  
thee till thou shalt remember and fret. . .*

Because fretting and remembering took hold of him, this young man, who went into the pit when he was thirteen, was driven to write of the miners.

*'What hast thou done for us, comrade? Hast  
spoken? Hast told thou our tale?'*

And because he was a poet, sensitive and full of sympathy, he achieved a little book that is both beautiful and memorable. Frederick Boden is neither hysterical nor sentimental; he is not a propagandist; there is no whining in *Miner*, no anger, no cynicism; its beauty is the beauty of courage and pity in suffering, of woe and despair. It has the heartbreaking beauty of a *Riders to the Sea*, for it does not stop at being a story of the times and underneath it aches the 'woefulness at the heart of things.' It is the simple story of a boy in a shoddy mining village, suffering the shame and misery of poverty and forced into a life of darkness and peril underground, facing terror and death, snatching at what little beauty he can, frustrated. *Miner* is a true story, the people are real, the quietness with which it is told make it all the more poignant; the dignity and strength of utter sincerity uphold it. The narration is straightforward, unaffected, lit up by flashes of marvellous reality. It is not a long book; its shortness, indeed, is a virtue, for it has the impact of a poem; it has the singleness of purpose and completeness of a blow; or of a cry.

R. H. AYRE

### CHILDREN OF THE SUN

THE CHINABERRY TREE, by Jessie Fauset (Elkin Mathews and Marrot; pp. 310; 7/6).

I ENVY those who have had the pleasure of reading Jessie Fauset's earlier books, *There is Confusion*, and *Plum Bun*, and hope to join their ranks at the earliest opportunity. The author of a book as good as *The Chinaberry Tree* could not possibly write a novel that would not be worth reading.

Books about the American Negro tend to be broadly and rather sentimentally ludicrous, or patronizingly pathetic, for which there seems to be fairly good reason, or starkly or sentimentally tragic, for which there is even better reason. In any case, there is always present a note of exaggeration, a stressing of differences from and antagonism to the white that gives the impression of novels about cats written for a society of dogs.

It is a distinct surprise to become aware that 'there is in America a great group of Negroes of education and substance who are living lives of quiet interests and pursuits quite unconnected with white folk save

as these are casually met; that these men and women carry on their lives, educate their children, and fill their time with interests social, domestic, and philanthropic as if there were no white people in America save those who serve them in shops and in traffic. In short, people in no essential of speech or outlook different from ourselves, who speak the same language, perhaps rather more musically, read the same books, enjoy the same amusements, cherish the same ambitions.

For all that, they are not the same. Theirs is still a peculiar, often painfully unjust situation, and the finer they are the more keenly they must feel it. Their mind too is not quite the same. The candid white must often feel that in more than one respect it is a finer, gentler, nobler, mind. As compared with a parallel white life, it seems to possess an inner warmth, a secret vigour, that more than one martyr to the Anglo-Saxon 'spleen' must secretly envy the children of the Sun.

*The Chinaberry Tree* presents a society that might almost be any small New England town, except for that persistent hint of vividness, the strange touch of more emphatic vitality that keys the actors up just a little above our normal pitch. It is not only atmosphere, however, that is rendered with a masterly touch. The characters, with their variety, their sensitive self-respect, their eagerness, their shyness, are strong and living. The development of the two main stories, that of Laurentine and that of Melissa, is handled with an economy that avoids alike bareness and irrelevant expansion; the threads of the plot are interwoven and advanced with a sure design, in a fully-realized pattern. It is not for nothing that the Greek mask enters into Melissa's dream, for in the sharp intensity of the actors, the grave, strange, terrible violence of the story, the fine dignity and essential nobility of the telling, there is nothing the book so much resembles as a tragedy of Sophocles. The catastrophe unfolds itself as naturally, as relentlessly to our expectation; the happy ending grows out of the depths of the characters themselves. It is in every way an excellent book.

L. A. MacKAY

#### CONTRIBUTORS

W. B. HERBERT is a graduate of the University of Alberta. For five years he served as Assistant Publicity Director for the Canadian Wheat Pool.

PRO BONO PUBLICO is the pseudonym of a Civil Servant who 'on account of advanced years and family responsibilities does not care to take the risk of publishing under his own name'.

C. S. RITCHIE is a graduate of Oxford, who is now on the teaching staff of Pickering College.

GEORGINA H. THOMSON is Reference Librarian in the Calgary Public Library.

A. C. THORN (Major) fought with a White Russian army against the Bolsheviks and was a prisoner for nine months in Moscow. He writes: 'I have been won round from wanting to fight Bolshevism to the attitude of an interested observer by the lies I have read about the Soviets in the press'. He is living at present in Montreal.

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## SHORT NOTICES

GOETHE, A CENTURY AFTER, by Frederick W. Felkin (Oxford University Press; pp. 84; \$1.00).

This, the most modest of the tributes in book-form to Goethe at his centenary, is by no means the least outstanding. One can only hope that it will not be crowded out by bulkier volumes. Whether one agrees with Mr. Felkin (at every point) or not—no two people see Goethe quite alike, it would seem—there can be no doubt that he is a real Goethean, who has gone deep into his author and can talk coherently about his experience. His direct search for the religious core of Goethe's mind associates him more nearly with J. Middleton Murry (in a recent *Adelphi* article) than with any other of the centenary critics and I have no doubt that—of the two—Mr. Felkin is the safer and more intelligible guide. It may be that he goes too far in his emphasis on Goethe's Platonism, as when he says that 'his poetic life was apart from his active life', which is surely less true of Goethe than of other poets, but this is after all a good fault which readily corrects itself and always points in the right direction. Only those who have reached the Platonic Goethe behind the Aristotelian have any right to talk about him. Mr. Felkin has every right.

B. F.

D. H. LAWRENCE, An Unprofessional Study, by Anaïs Nin (Edward W. Titus, Paris; limited edition of 500 copies; pp. 146).

This is certainly a very unprofessional study. It is evidently the work of an enthusiastic and well-intentioned amateur—not a formal critical monograph, but rather a few marginal notes jotted down during a reading and re-reading of all Lawrence's work. The result is that the little volume contains some excellent remarks, and is altogether an interesting record of the effect produced by Lawrence upon a contemporary woman-reader, but not very significant for anyone who has not already a considerable acquaintance with and admiration for Lawrence's work.

For example, the first half of the book consists of ten short chapters concerned with such considerable topics as 'Lawrence's World,' 'Death,' 'Woman,' 'The Return to the Primitive,' which are not easily dealt with in a few sentences. And the remaining chapters concerning some of the more important works are subjected to a curious sketchy method of swift selection and short almost laconic comment. Some of the larger problems too, such as Lawrence's style, are just glimpsed as it were and delicately touched in the course of our swift flight. And then we get a paragraph like this:

'Proust is meticulous. Lawrence sometimes progresses with the same infinite care.'

and may perhaps be permitted to question whether the method is wholly successful.

Miss Nin, it is true, puts forward one definite theory which explains a good many qualities which she finds in Lawrence; and this may have been the real point of the book. Lawrence was an 'androgynous writer'. 'He had a complete realization of the feelings of women. In fact, very often he wrote as a woman would write. It is a well-known fact that a critic attributed *The White Peacock* to a woman. . . . It is not the first time that artists and poets have come closer to the woman than other men have. But it is the first time that a man has so wholly and completely expressed woman accurately.'

This is very high praise, and seems at first quite specific, until we remember that the work of Homer has also been attributed to a woman.

H. J. D.

THE COINAGE OF ENGLAND, by Charles Oman (Oxford University Press; pp. xii, 395, Plates XLV; \$7.00).

Professor Oman's book is, one supposes, meant chiefly for the delight and guidance of the numismatist. The minute descriptions of the enormous number of English coins should be adequate to the requirements of the collector. The layman might become bewildered by the complicated sequences and alternations of cross pattée, pommée, fleury, bottonnée, voided; of pellets and annulets; of mint marks lis, cross-crosslet, rose; of heraldic devices varying from one another often in some barely perceptible feature. Fortunately, there are at the end of the book forty-five plates, each containing from twelve to forty perfectly intelligible illustrations. Unfortunately, the references in the text to these plates are sometimes inaccurate. From the technical side, one must accept the assurance of the only enthusiast in numismatics whom one happens to know, that Mr. Oman's book is the most complete and authoritative work on English coinage that has yet appeared.

There is, however, much to interest the layman. The scholarly author knows his subject so thoroughly that he can afford to lighten his style by occasional

bits of playfulness and humour. One is surprised, too, to find so much that is practical and timely. The difficulties of bimetalism are illustrated in the history of twelve centuries of it, from about 600 to 1816, when Great Britain went on a gold standard. Experiments are described in inflation and deflation, in mediaeval price-pegging; in alternating prohibitions of gold and silver export. Curious and fascinating paragraphs explain the names and origins of English coins. By the time one has finished the book, one finds the teasing coinage of Britain alive with historical interest, and one understands the reluctance to destroy its continuity.

J. D. R.

BUREAUCRACY TRIUMPHANT, by C. K. Allen (Oxford University Press; pp. 148; \$1.65).

This little book consists of a collection of articles or papers written by Professor Allen during the past ten years, which appeared in a number of English periodicals, notably the *Quarterly Review*, the *Law Quarterly*, and the *Journal of the Society of Public Teachers of Law*. They deal with a subject, the growth of bureaucracy, that is becoming of necessity of the utmost importance in our modern society, and with the particular difficulties that English Law countries experience in dealing with this development. This difficulty is due in part to our failure to provide an adequate system of administrative law as the French, for instance, have done. As Professor Allen points out, '90 per cent. of (English) students beginning the study of constitutional law form the impression that France lives under a system of bureaucratic tyranny little short of 'Tsarism'—and then goes on to state that 'the remedies of the subject against the state in France are easier, speedier and infinitely cheaper than they are in England today'. In commenting on the defects of the situation in England he says further 'the objectionable feature of these departmental tribunals is that they work in the dark and decide legal issues by methods of their own manufacture', and further 'the state is not an honest man. Its dishonesty is the worse because it combines the method of the bully, who has all the odds in his favour, with those of the casuist who can make the worse appear the better reason'. He then goes on to cite a number of cases in which, if grave injustice was not done, great expense



and unnecessary delay were the lot of the unfortunate citizen because no adequate provision is made for bringing action against government officials or departments. Professor Allen's papers are of interest to all students of government, but they should prove of particular interest to those who believe in socialism, for they point out certain of the dangers and defects that are inherent in state control. These defects are not inevitable, but, if they are to be avoided, provision will have to be made for dealing with situations similar to those outlined so clearly by Professor Allen.

N. A. McK.

RELIGIOUS ESSAYS, by Rudolf Otto (Oxford University Press; pp. 160; \$2.50).

Readers of Professor Otto's *Idea of the Holy* will be interested in his elaboration in these essays of the thesis of that book. The 'numinous' is to Dr. Otto the key to the whole of the religious life, and it is impossible properly to understand even the terminology of religion (particularly the Christian religion) apart from it. In the first four lectures he takes the concepts of Sin, Flesh and Spirit, Lostness, and Original Guilt, and shows that they (and others related to them) can only find their true and original meaning when taken out of the moral sphere and assimilated to the numinous atmosphere of the Old and New Testaments. Certainly Dr. Otto succeeds in this way in rehabilitating terms that for many had passed or were passing out of current use, and he may be right in believing that if they had always been kept where they properly belonged they would never have lost 'their unimpeachable truth for the religious sense'.

As a good example of a numinous event, Dr. Otto cites the Lord's Supper. Tracing this Sacrament to its origin in the Jewish 'Qiddush', he sees its real moment in the transubstantiation, not of a physical substance into a hyperphysical substance, but of an event (the breaking of bread) into another event (Golgotha); so that the 'real presence' in the Sacrament is not divine materials but 'the most numinous fact in the world's history, in fact of Golgotha'. This is an illuminating essay, and if it is given the attention it deserves it might indeed (as Dr. Otto hopes) provide some common ground upon which the separated denominations may meet in sacramental doctrine and practice. Following this theory into its liturgical consequences, the author has included in this book two extremely suggestive forms of service, one for general use, and one for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and their evangelical-

catholic character should give them an appeal to a wide circle.

Amongst the remaining essays there is a cautious discussion of the possibility of a Universal Religion and an estimate of the influence of Darwinism upon religion, the latter of which he concludes with the judgment that there are 'certainly no means for discovering God and his purposes through natural science'.

Dr. Otto is decidedly a man to be reckoned with in the religious field; and that means that this book of essays is important enough to be read. It has been well translated by Brian Lunn.

F. J. M.

COLONIAL ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, by Helen J. Crump (Longmans, Green; pp. xi, 200; \$3.00).

This is Imperial Study No. 5 of the Royal Empire Society, and as the foreword states, 'aims to show why colonial admiralty courts developed and how they were regarded throughout the Empire and in India'. Despite its title it is a historical rather than a legal study, in which the author tries to discover 'the reasons which led the colonists to desire or dislike admiralty courts, and which made the imperial government or colonial promoters wish to establish admiralty jurisdiction overseas'. But the book has some practical importance because of the fact that admiralty courts still function in Canada, and are still influenced by the decisions of admiralty courts in other parts of the Empire, and it is desirable to know their past in order that one may understand their present. The book contains chapters on the English Vice-Admiralty System, Admiralty Jurisdiction in Massachusetts, Virginia and Maryland, Bermuda; Prize and Piracy in Jamaica and other colonies; Vice-Admiralty Courts under the British East India Company; a Bibliography, and an Index.

N. A. McK.

THE BIBLE AND ITS BACKGROUND, by C. H. Dodd, D.D. (Allen & Unwin; pp. 90; \$ .75).

This excellent little introduction to the Bible consists of a series of broadcast talks under the auspices of the B. B. C. The fact that it is by the author of *The Authority of the Bible* is sufficient to commend it. Nothing better for its size can be hoped for.

F. J. M.

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Autumn Term opens September 15th.

A BOOK OF LONDON ENGLISH, 1384-1425, edited by R. W. Chambers and Marjorie Daunt, with an Appendix on English Documents in the Record Office by M. M. Weale (Oxford University Press; pp. 395; \$5.00).

This is a collection of seventy-five documents which illustrate the speech of London in Chaucer's day. When it is recalled that even Morbach, in his great study, *Über den Ursprung der neuenglischen Schriftsprache*, had only fourteen documents in London speech, the authority of this book becomes evident. Every care has been taken to assure the maximum of probability that the speech employed is the speech of Londoners. This care has led to exclusions which would not have been made before such factors as the influence of copyists were recognized as they are today.

The large number of documents and the rigidity of selection make *A Book of London English, 1384-1425* invaluable to the student of Middle English in its most important period, that of Chaucer and his contemporaries. The student of Chaucer, for instance, will find much illustrative material from which to draw first hand conclusions with regard to that author's language. From the standpoint of modern standard literary English, the interest is heightened by the fact that the documents are in that regional dialect which contributed most to our standard literary language.

The collection is not primarily intended as a mirror of London life of the period, but the diversity of the documents in it is such that incidentally many fascinating and unexpected glimpses are given into social conditions. It is, however, as the best collection published as yet of specimens of London speech at the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth that this book will serve its most useful end.

J. D. R.

VARIETY OF WAYS, by Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford Press; pp. vi & 118; \$1.50).

Mr. Bonamy Dobrée is well known to all who are interested in the literature of the Restoration, and this new volume will only be disappointing to them because they will probably have seen already the essays on Congreve and Bunyan which have been published before as Introductions in the *World's Classics*, and may well have read too those on Dryden, Halifax and Steele, which appeared before in the *Times Literary Supplement*. In addition to these, there are eighteen pages on Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* and a prefatory paragraph or two, explanatory of the title, which suggests that the method of approach was 'to find out in what vari-

ety of ways they tackled living'. 'All lived at much the same time, in much the same world of ideas; but beyond that, and the fact that they could all write, there seems little enough to connect them.' We are prepared therefore to find no generalization, or conclusion, or discovery from their juxtaposition. And we do find, especially in the essays on Congreve and Halifax, a very careful analysis of the delicate and subtle qualities of their writing and a pleasant commentary indicative of their very different attitudes to life.

H. J. D.

A STUDENT'S MANUAL OF BIBLIOGRAPHY, by Arundell Esdaile (Allen and Unwin; pp. 383; \$3.75).

Bibliography has until the last decade

or two been one of the most supercilious of studies. Its connection with book-collecting may have been in large measure responsible for this. Of late years, however, there has been a marked change. In the first place, the appalling extent of literature in practically every field of learning has compelled many of the greater universities to train their graduate and even their undergraduate students in bibliographical methods. Then the rise of librarianship as an important profession has had its share in forcing a more democratic attitude upon bibliography.

As a result we have practical bibliographical manuals, of which the little text published some thirteen years ago by Mr. Tom Peete Cross was one of the pioneers. The manual under review marks a great

## Conference Charivari

AS WE GO to press the Imperial Conference at Ottawa is running at full blast. Each Imperial unit is trying to blast a way into the markets of all the other Imperial units. On the economic field of Ottawa Mr. Baldwin is playing cricket — he always plays cricket on every field — and seems to be making a good score. On the other hand Mr. Bennett is playing baseball — or is it lacrosse — the Indian delegates are playing polo, and the Irish representatives are playing 'The Wearing of the Green'. All this adds colour and interest to the proceedings, but it makes it a little difficult for the uninstructed onlooker to keep track of the game. Behind and beneath all the obscurantist oratory, back of the flag-waving and the smoke-screen of sentiment, there are big plans afoot. The intelligent observer who wishes to see clearly through all these convolutions, to grasp the rational kernel within the mystical shell, to obtain the low-down on practical politics, should read *THE CANADIAN FORUM*, the journal which attempts to clear away all the blah, hokum, hooey, guff, and bunk that obscures realities, and show things as they are in all their Doukhobor simplicity. *THE CANADIAN FORUM* will be sent to any address in the world for \$2.00 a year.



## The Canadian Forum

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advance on the earlier ones. It is as long as is required for ordinary use, and not so exhaustive as to be unmanageable. This practical type of production was to be expected from a veteran bibliographical educationist like Mr. Esdaile, whose work in the British Museum, in Cambridge and in the London School of Librarianship has fitted him admirably to write such a manual.

The technical and mechanical aspects of book-making are first described. A concise historical sketch is given. After chapters devoted to illustration and book-binding come two on the collation and description of books. The last third of the manual is devoted to bibliography proper: to the principles and arrangement of bibliographies; finally, to an invaluable list of some two hundred leading works of reference.

J. D. R.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF CONDUCT AND RELIGION, by J. G. McKenzie, M.A., B.D. (Allen & Unwin; pp. 144; \$1.30).

Mr. McKenzie is a clerical-psychologist who has had considerable experience among people disturbed by doubt and harassed by fear, and he here shares the fruits of his experience with such as are engaged in pastoral work. His book is eminently sane and practical, and offers useful guidance in dealing with the special problems of adolescence, youth and delinquency.

F. J. M.

INNER LIGHT, a Devotional Anthology (Allen & Unwin; pp. 374; \$1.00).

The only valid criticism one could make of this book is that the paper is a little too transparent, and of dubious strength for continuous use. For the selection of passages, it deserves nothing but praise, whether one consider the breadth of source, or the dignity and fineness of feeling and expression. Its quality is as fine as Robert Bridges' 'Spirit of Man' but in place of the humanistic aesthetic interests of this there is a broader humanity and a more confident assertion. It is by all odds the best book of the kind that I have ever seen.

L. A. M.

THE VALUES OF LIFE, by Viscount Ennismore (Allen & Unwin; pp. 63; \$1.00).

This little volume is one of a series being published by Education Services, an English Society for assisting experiment in education. The author discusses in turn the hedonistic, scientific, aesthetic, moral, and religious attitudes towards life, and concludes that there can be no hope

of reducing the great human values to unity 'until psychology has given way to metaphysics'. There is, nevertheless, one feature common to them all — love.

F. J. M.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*The listing of a book in this column does not preclude a more extended notice in this or subsequent issues.*

#### CANADIAN

SPIRITUAL LIFE, by Charles A. Zavitz (A. Talbot, London, Ont.).

DEMOCRACY AND RELIGION, by T. R. Glover (Ryerson Press; pp. 108; \$1.25).

#### GENERAL

A HISTORY OF SHAKESPEARIAN CRITICISM, by Augustus Ralli (Oxford University Press; 2 Vols. pp. x, 566 & 582; \$12.75).

ATLANTIC MURDER, by Frank H. Shaw (Elkin Mathews & Marrot; pp. vii, 279; 7/6).

THE CRADLE OF REALITY, by John Hilsyde (Elkin Mathews & Marrot; pp. vii, 84; 2/6).

CULMINATION, by John Furnill (Elkin Mathews & Marrot; pp. ix, 534; 7/6).

THE CHINABERRY TREE, by Jessie Fauset (Elkin Mathews & Marrot; pp. x, 310; 7/6).

REALISM IN AMERICAN EDUCATION, by W. S. Learned (Harvard University Press; pp. 70).

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE, by Howard D. Langford (Teachers College, Columbia University; pp. vi, 212; \$2.00).

AMERICAN ECONOMIC THOUGHT IN THE 17TH CENTURY, by E. A. J. Johnson (P. S. King; pp. xi, 292; 12/-).

THANK HEAVEN FASTING, by E. M. Delafield (Macmillans in Canada; pp. vii, 282; \$2.25).

ELIZABETHAN STAGE CONDITIONS, by M. C. Bradbrook (Macmillans in Canada; pp. 148; \$1.50).

BENEFITS RECEIVED, by Alice G. Rosman (Minton Balch - Thomas Allen; pp. 276; \$2.00).

THREE SONGS, by Dorothy Hale & Frank Leedam (Arthur H. Stockwell; 2/-).

THE ENGLISH POETIC MIND, by Charles Williams (Oxford University Press; pp. 213; \$2.25).

STANHOPE, by Basil Williams (Oxford University Press; pp. xv, 478; \$5.50).

TWO AFRICAN PLAYS, by R. E. Lloyd (Longmans, Green; pp. 184; \$2.00).

CHARLOTTE BRONTE, by E. F. Benson (Longmans, Green; pp. xiii, 313; \$4.00).

EDUCATION IN DENMARK, Edited by A. Boje, Ernst J. Borup, H. Rutzebeck (Oxford University Press; pp. 288; \$2.25).



#### NEW CITIZENS

The Editor, THE CANADIAN FORUM,  
Sir:

I have all my life been connected with schools and colleges, except for my two years in the C.E.F. Having thus lived all my life in organized communities, in which one was taught to seek not one's own but the common good, I have a natural leaning to Socialism in one form or another. But there is one question which I have often asked my Socialist friends, and never had adequately answered. Can you answer it for me or else refer me to accessible printed matter?

The present method of carrying on the community is individualistic in the extreme. Nor does any other method seem likely of adoption for some generations at least, *pace* Mr. J. B. S. Haldane. But how can one possibly plan or organize a community into which the raw lust of every boy and girl whom nature

drives together pours daily an unlimited supply of new citizens? Granted that even with our present methods of recruiting the material to be organized, our communal life may be lifted far above its present level, the question remains: why should the community bring up, find work for, give unemployment insurance to, and eventually grant an Old Age Pension to members produced in so individualistic and frequently irregular a manner, and for such wholly individualistic reasons? Birth control offers no remedy for this anomaly, for its advocates urge it only as a private measure, and the believers in enforced sterilization of criminals and lunatics admit that their proposal concerns only a small fraction of the community. The imagination boggles at a state monopoly of breeding. Yet without it, how organize the community?

Yours, etc.,

W. L. GRANT

## GIVE HIM HIS DUE

The Editor, THE CANADIAN FORUM,  
Sir:

In your recent issue you commented upon the Federal Government's decision in the radio broadcasting matter in a manner which seemed to me to be neither fair nor dignified.

There was not the slightest justification in ascribing to the Prime Minister in the Government's decision such motives as you did. The fact is that Mr. Bennett came to his conclusions as to

what was best for the country in this in a perfectly straightforward and logical manner and acted accordingly.

I have been in as great disagreement with him as you have in many things, but in this matter if you can't be big enough to 'give the devil his due', you should be wise enough to do so, for attacking him without justification does not inspire confidence in the reasonableness of your criticisms generally.

Yours, etc.,

ROSS MACDONALD



## JACOB BEN AMI AND THE ESSENTIALS

FEW of us in this spoiled and fevered western world would be content to squat on the ground with Mr. Gandhi and his spinning wheel. Perhaps we are too lazy; perhaps we have not enough imagination; perhaps, like the robots in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, we are too well 'conditioned' to compulsory consumption for the sake of the enterprising gentlemen who manufacture electric refrigerators and automobiles. At any rate, we have developed a multiplicity of 'barest necessities' and we are prone to increase them rather than weed them out and simplify our lives. Even in our amusements we have come to depend upon complicated apparatus rather than on our own imaginations and muscles — although we have not yet gone so far as the Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy. We have mechanized our theatre. Apart altogether from the synthetic entertainments, talkies, and the radio, which eliminate direct human contact, we have delivered up the theatre to apparatus. Machinery is necessary, of course, in the simplest theatre. (Even Ghandi's spinning wheel is a machine.) But we have made the mistake of valuing it too much for its own sake and exploiting it at the expense of the human body and soul. The theatre is not a stage. The theatre was as great a moving force in the life of mankind when it stood in the marketplace as it is in this century of vast auditoriums, revolving platforms and batteries of electric lights.

'I am going to prove to you that you are not needed in the theatre,' said Jacob Ben-Ami several years ago to Robert Edmond Jones. He took the designer to see a great Sicilian actor who had crossed the Atlantic and was playing in a shoddy theatre on the Bowery. The stage was poverty-stricken, the actor almost illiterate, neither Ben-Ami nor Jones could understand Italian, but the drama was human, it was *alive*, and it was rich beyond the dreams of Broadway — gilded palaces, fashionable audiences, thousands of dollars squandered on effects and illusions — could not have made it one whit the richer, the more sincere, the more thrilling. Jones could never be satisfied with mere stage designing after that: he realized that the theatre was not a stage. The theatre is human flesh and spirit. And human flesh and spirit are easily crushed under the weight of splendid apparatus.

Now the purport of this is not that we should go back to spinning wheels and rushlights, to playing Punch and Judy in the streets, forget all we have learned and smash all the machinery. There would be no sense in that. But there would be sense in putting the gear in its proper place, in clearing away the trappings so that we can come near the human heart. In so far as they help us, let us use these accoutrements, but too often they clutter life and stifle the essentials. And how often are they no more than elaborate frauds to disguise a barren hollow!

Thoughts like these come to us when we see the theatre in its simplicity and

its utter sincerity, as *La Compagnie des Quinze* in *Noë*; the Abbey Theatre Players in *The Playboy of the Western World*, and Jacob Ben-Ami in *Green Fields*.

To all who love and value the true theatre, the theatre which is human, the give and take of human emotions, Ben-Ami's short visit to Canada early in the summer was a great stimulus. He came quietly, as a Jewish actor bringing Yiddish folk-plays to his own people, and left the Gentiles to find him out if they would. During his three weeks in Toronto, he appeared in five productions: *Green Fields*, *The Fooled Bridegroom*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The Idiot*, and that strange and powerful melodrama of modern Germany, *Peripherie*. His staging was of the simplest; the settings were naturalistic, as befitted the subjects, but Ben-Ami was satisfied with suggestion rather than unimaginative photographic detail; human beings were his first consideration. He and his little company could act; that was the essential thing.

It would be ridiculous to suggest that a knowledge of Yiddish would not have been an advantage to the playgoer, but it is a tribute to acting and to Ben-Ami to say that it was not necessary. A book consists of words. But a play is not words any more than it is machinery. Words may be used to assist, but primarily a play is action, posture and gesture, pantomime, the expression of human emotion through the body. Without words, it is true, the play would be only a sort of dance; but a body held rigid or a head dropped or a hand reaching for a doorknob or a fist crashing on the table are more important on the stage than the words that might accompany them. Given the keynote of the play, the audience should understand without language. No words were necessary for a full appreciation of Tzine turning into a woman in *Green Fields*. No one who saw her can easily forget Tzine, the raw country maid, dressing up for her new part, Tzine pulling on her stockings and high-heeled boots, Tzine putting a new ribbon in her hair and bending over the water barrel to admire her reflection. Was it the genius of Ben-Ami as a director, of Helen Zelinskaya as an actress, or of Peretz Hirshbein as a writer? All three, no doubt, but the fact remains that this was authentic, exciting theatre and it had nothing to do with either language or machinery. Unforgettable, too, was the episode of the scholar teaching Tzine and her brother to write their names, the boy following every movement of the pen with his bare toe. How memorable the old water-carrier talking to his buckets in *The Fooled Bridegroom*! How memorable and thrilling the frenzy of poor

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Yoshke tearing the shirt off his back as the beggars clamour about him like the hideous figures of a nightmare!

These are the things of the theatre.

ROBERT AYRE

## CANADIAN PLAYS

LATE in June the new Playwrights' Studio Group presented, in Hart House Theatre, three of their one-act plays. At their request, Edgar Stone had secured directors and casts from the ranks of the regular Hart House players, so that these plays were seen to much better advantage than the average Canadian piece.

*Maternity Marathon*, by Dora Smith Conover, possesses an excellent idea: the satirizing of the unholy struggle for the bequest of that sardonic old humorist Charles W. Millar; and a good main outline: a blowzy virago, mother of twenty-three, has come to the lawyers' office direct from the delivery of her tenth infant born within the course of the marathon—to be confronted by the husband of her only known rival, whose wife has just lost her life in outstripping her competitor with an eleventh child, prematurely wrenched into the world. After much bickering over details, they suddenly learn that the bonds which had backed the bequest are worthless, so that the victory is hollow, their pains all in vain. Meanwhile another woman has come in, a quiet little creature, who has arrived by chance, ignorant of the competition, but who has, merely in the natural course of her life, brought to light twelve infants within the ten-year period. The others depart, robbed of their reward, but she, who has expected nothing, is given a consolation cheque.

A splendid idea, obviously; but the actual construction is weak and clumsy, and the dialogue poor. As it stands, the play is not worth doing again, but a complete rethinking, reconstruction, and rewriting should make it a vigorous and timely contribution to our slight store of Canadian drama.

The first five or six minutes of *The Outpost*, by Leonora McNeely, was delightful, and introduced a charming rural egotist, in a passage of easy natural dialogue. From the point of this character's first exit, however, the author's lack of an outline, even of a definite idea, became more and more apparent. She administered a gradually strengthened Pollyanaesthetic to her characters, and gave the audience some really painful moments. This play, too, is decidedly not in shape for production. It might well be rewritten round that delightful figure already mentioned, or round the doctor, or, as at present, round the girl; but the characters must come to life, as only

Danny (?) and Lizzie do in its present form; and sentiment must not dissolve into sentimentality.

*Fifty Faces Spring*, by Rica McLean Farquharson, is a quite sprightly, quite amusing farce, which concerns the re-adolescence of Father and his apparent straying from the straight-and-narrow—only apparent, of course. It is preceded by a scene in pantomime in which each character enters, drinks tea or performs some similar ceremony, is wisecracked about from the forestage by a so-called narrator, and makes his exit. The lines of this prologue are fairly amusing, and the idea novel, but it is entirely valueless, and it seemed to this observer that the time might much better have been given to filling out the rather tenuous body of the play itself. As it stands, however, this farce is well-written and actable, just the thing for the froth of an evening's fare.

P. A. G.

## DREISER, PIRANDOTHELLO, WAR AND WALTZES

IN *The Real Sins of Hollywood*, in a recent issue of *Liberty*, Theodore Dreiser paints a picture of the Hollywood peepshow plant which is horrid but sadly true. Mr. Dreiser's basic contention is that stories of real artistic worth need not, as they are now, be essentially changed in order to be appreciated as entertainment by the great movie-going public. As an argument he cites the stubborn efforts and eventual success of Maude Adams, of Booth, and of Irving, in giving the public worthy theatrical fare. And as an outstanding example of the wasting of great talents he instances the succession of worthless screen stories, some based on not unworthy material, which have been Garbo's lot. He suggests as a slight step forward 'that actors and actresses sufficiently gifted to present the higher art forms should be reserved by the motion picture industry—some central board of art criticism, let us say—for at least one superior production a year'. And, still more definitely, he suggests that Marlene Dietrich be given the opportunity of playing *Thais*, and Garbo of appearing in *Wuthering Heights*.

Mr. Dreiser puts a good deal of faith in the more gifted actors and actresses themselves, in their discrimination regarding material, were they given any say in that regard. This faith, I fear, is scarcely justified. Garbo, judging from the myriad tales of the influence which such a threat as 'Ay tank ay go home now' has upon her producers, must long have been in a position to demand a good deal. Yet she has played in film after film marred by the commonplace

and the shoddy; she has submitted to the ultimate dragging in of the prop Sunbeam, to the stereotyped renunciation finale, to all sorts of false notes. Ruth Chatterton and George Arliss are similar examples of actors who ought to have had a good influence upon the taste of the producers, but who have shown themselves lacking in discrimination.

A step more likely to raise artistic standards would be to allow the director a reasonably free hand. If he must work with a banal or botched script, he ought at least to be permitted to edit his own attempt to make something out of that script. Directors are at last beginning to demand this freedom. Mervyn LeRoy, according to *Variety*, 'recently won a point from Warner Bros., whereby he is left alone until the first cut of his pictures is made. "It should go further than this," says Le Roy. "The director should at least be allowed to edit his stuff till the first (public) preview. Why pay a man big money, entrust him with a production up to several thousand dollars and not let him interpret his script as he sees it? That's what he is paid for." Von Sternberg, according to the same account, 'won that point along with the other issues involved on *The Blonde Venus*, and will be head man until the finished picture is finally turned over to the studio'. Meanwhile, however, 'editing is generally being entrusted to \$40-a-week film cutters working under executives who want a finger in the pie, although having had no directorial experience'.

Von Sternberg's is a really notable victory for the cause of artistry in the movies. Let us hope that soon Le Roy, Vidor, Milestone, Howard and such capable directors may also receive this elementary but essential privilege.

As *You Desire Me* is worth seeing because of Garbo's excellent performance, hampered though she is by a second-rate director—George Fitzmaurice—and about as unsuitable a supporting cast as could have been gathered. Opposite her appear Melvyn Douglas, the latest addition to the Wooden Indians Club; the personable Owen Moore doing his useless best in the role played by Hugh Miller in the stage production seen in Canada; and Erich Von Stroheim, who ought to have been an ideal Salter, but who overacts grotesquely and speaks with as vile an American accent as has been heard on the screen. Bits of the stage play have been retained—for auld lang Syne, perhaps—and these bits are the effective passages of the movie: The opening scenes, cut from an entire act to about seven minutes; and the final scene, satisfactorily done except for the dulling of the keen idea that personality, not physical identity, is what matters, and con-



cluding, not with the tremendous effective departure of Zara-Maria, but with a very ugly kiss. The 'additional dialogue', which constitutes at least two-thirds of the total, was written by Gene Markey, well-known for his command of racing and other sporting vernacular. Ivor Novello, under contract to the same company, was apparently considered scarcely experienced enough to pinch-hit for Pirandello.

*Carnival* is worth seeing for many reasons: notably for its adaptation and direction, which minimize dialogue and concentrate on action, showing that a stage play can be made into genuine cinema; for the perfect performance of Joseph Schildkraut; for the winsomeness and ability of Dorothy Bouchier; for the slightly stagey but very effective performance of Matheson Lang; and for the fine photography. Its one flaw—and it is a sad one—is that through pressure from some quarter the natural ending has been exposed to artificial sunlight of the virulent Hollywood brand. Nevertheless, Herbert Wilcox has, in this slightly Othelloesque drama, an achievement to be proud of.

*The Doomed Battalion* is an extremely natural drama based, strangely enough, on an actual incident. Luis Trenker appears in the leading role of this story which he wrote, and the Tyrolean scenes of which he directed with great skill and, on the whole, great restraint. No little credit is due Cyril Gardner, who succeeded in keying the scenes made in Hollywood to the pitch of Trenker's work. Most delightful of all is the fact that an obvious opportunity for the introduction of the tried-and-true adultery motif is overlooked entirely, and that the usual maudlin re-meeting of husband and wife is notable by its absence. Simple, vigorous, a trifle melodramatic at times, the film is a pictorial joy and a mental and spiritual relief from the Hollywood round.

*Congress Dances* is the most brilliantly designed and executed musical film I have yet seen. Directed by Erik Charell under the supervision of Erich Pommer, the master who trained Lubitsch, it is a defter piece of work than anything Lubitsch has achieved in that direction, a defter piece of work than *Sunshine Susie*—though of necessity lacking such a gorguous one-man show as Jack Hulbert. The story, alleged by at least one alleged critic to be either nonexistent or incomprehensible, is simple, not essentially original, but full of original twists, and effectively told against the background of the court of the fascinating Metternich. This role, not a large one, is played superbly by Conrad Veidt, and Henry Garat does an amazing piece of acting as both the intelligent Tsar and his stupid double.

Gibb McLaughlin and Lillian Harvey could not be bettered, and Reginald Purdell only occasionally lacks finish. If you are reasonably alert you will enjoy *Congress Dances* immensely.

Zwei Herten is the disappointment of the month. Judging from the hearty laughter all about me, the dialogue was most amusing, but to one who had to depend solely on its cinematic virtues the film seemed tiresomely naive, and thin without that deftness of direction which makes the tenuous delicious. The acting was excellent, except that of Gretl Thumer, who had nothing to commend her but an evident eagerness to please.

In *Silver Screen* for July one Hale Horton, allegedly alumnus of Yale, writes somewhat approvingly of Joan Crawford. The second paragraph of his essay reads: 'But on the other hand one finds something futile in writing about her; for there is no more possibility of truly evaluating her character than there is of writing an unbiased biography of the great poet, Goethe, a task never accomplished . . . for both Joan and Goethe embrace all humanity.'

Mr. Horton, you and Professor Fairley should get together.

PAUL GARDNER.

#### TRAVELOGUES

OF ALL the 'features' in a contemporary bill of fare at the movies, I suppose none shows a more lamentable gap between its present form and its possibilities than the travelogues.

The photography in these travel films is often nothing short of superb: one only wishes they would not hurry us away so fast from some exotic and fascinating views. But why in the name of common-sense do they think it necessary to have an incessant running fire of monologue with it? Sometimes the owner of the explanatory voice is visible, patting the heads of native children, or clambering on elephants, or dining with reception committees and so forth. Most of the time, however, it is a disembodied voice, with a persistent grin in it that remains to the end like the grin of the Cheshire Cat. This voice, emitting scraps of general chatty information, brightened every two minutes with a wise-crack or a side-long facetious allusion to prohibition, or the Republican Party, or what not, plays with a hollywooden sprightliness, the double role of a guide and music-hall comedian. Some of us have experienced the irritation of trying to follow an adult conversation in a drawing room while a self-assertive and ill-bred child keeps up an audible monologue. That, anyhow, is the sort of accumulating annoyance that I feel

during one of these recitals. If only the man would shut up! Positively the voice is so distracting that I can not see the picture properly. I want to give all my attention to these entrancing views, but that indefatigable voice is like someone continually nudging me. It might be tolerable if the guide would deny himself those depressingly vulgar and unfunny asides. Then at least one might be spared the hoots and giggles of a too-responsive audience.

Of course I recognize that some Baedeker explanation is necessary and desirable. But why can it not be given concisely, and without gratuitous pleasantries of a char-à-banc order? Above all, let the voice be intermittent, so as to allow us really to perceive what is being presented. When one considers what these views of the world might be; what endless possibilities of unforeseen delight and interest are latent in them, if only the producer would let them flower in our minds in silence!

Not only, however, is the voice of the guide an affliction to the sensitive ear. The music that sometimes fills in an interval (while the voice, I suppose, takes breath or a drink,) is chosen with the delicate *à propos* so characteristic of Hollywood. On the particular occasion I am thinking of we were shown a view of the Taj Mahal. Now to us, of course, that tomb has no emotional and little historical associations, as for instance Westminster Abbey has. But surely its dignity and beauty, even if alien to us, are fairly obvious to even the most unperceptive person. And surely it is fairly generally known that it is the tomb of a dead woman, thus mourned in stone. Yet (I am telling the sober truth) while that monument was visible on the screen, it was celebrated by the maudlin and greasy strains of *Little Grey Home in the West*. The Taj Mahal can hardly be described as little, nor grey, nor a home, nor in the West. But why worry? Any Hollywood-hardened audience accepts such offerings without blinking.

K. M. P.

#### ATTRACTIONS AND — DETRACTIONS

PATIENCE is a virtue of course and as such its own reward. Dividends have been cut by the depression, however, and anyway there IS a limit! We must admit though that we haven't carried on so long solely on the wages of virtue. There are more substantial compensations. Almost any feature, by comparison, proves that there is yet balm in Gilead, and even in that howling wilderness—transferred epithet, we are howling but the wilderness isn't silent either, alas!

—of Added Attractions, which is the burden of our plaint, 'the ravin's feed us' of course, and sometimes there is genuine manna, water from the rock, or even a burning bush.

Such transient gleams, however (we never mix our metaphors), are more precious than pertinent—too exceptional exceptions to have anything to do with the rule—which is after this fashion. . . You enter the theatre, say, in the later stages of the film that has drawn your interest, and the fade-out on the embrace finds you just nicely acclimatized, your curiosity a little whetted, your mental attitude an expansive tendency to help Hollywood hand you happiness. Now the first Added Attraction beams back your benevolence from the screen. If it happens to be a newsreel you haven't seen before, and you can remember that that isn't the same horse race that you saw last time—so far so good. Go further and fare worse! Is it a proverb or a prophecy? There is an Animal Comedy and another comedy with the Added Attraction of human beings. (If you've been lucky both at cards and in love, it may be the one about a man who wants to leave town for his health and a redcap who never forgets anything.) There is the Added Attraction of a violinist with the Added Attraction of seeing him double by trick photography—Allah be praised! the sound effects do not redouble. There is the latest in shoes, with the Added Attraction of verbose descriptions thereof. A travelogue tells you where not to go and what you wouldn't see there if you did go. And there is always Golf with Glamour or Tennis Without Tears or Fishing with Finish. How rare alas! is the companion who on such occasions has the courage and conviction to do what Napoleon would have done. 'A fish picture—boring of course. Mind if I go on talking?' I might describe the agonies of mind—and the crick in the neck from prolonged contemplation of the ceiling—the heroic endurance and steadfast devotion to a far shining goal which bring at last their reward. But there are too many war books already. The average irony of a Swift might find noble employment there—but Swift knew not the 'talking short' and I know not his savage irony.

I do submit, however, in all seriousness that the present policy in this regard is poor psychology, poor showmanship, and very bad art. If the last consideration may be passed over with a shrug, the honour of the great God Box Office is deeply involved in the other two. The effect of the present quantity and quality of 'shorts' is to sate rather than to whet the appetite for the 'pièce de résistance'. Taking the broader view of the whole performance, effective display is never

achieved by excess of detail—which thus becomes both wasteful and injurious. If the idea is to substitute for vaudeville, it should be remembered that the value of vaudeville lay in variety, in the introduction of flesh and blood performers in contrast to the shadowy actors of the screen, in rest and reconditioning of eyes and emotional values. This is an end which added screen productions cannot serve at all and the loss of which is far from being compensated for by the command of greater artists and broader facilities. Goethe's much laboured statement 'Who brings much will bring something to many' does not make him an advocate of the 'talking short'.

However painful the preparatory ordeal one always arrives eventually at the feature picture—and here we are! Having relieved our feelings a bit, we have gone back to counting our blessings—and of the greatest of these is Ruth Chatterton—more truly than ever since *The Rich Are Always With Us*. By way of a delightful surprise the production provides not only a display of the unfailing Chatterton poise, delicacy, and unfaltering grasp and interpretation of the significant moment, but also a finely shaded, pertinent plot, original in its implications and psychologically genuine and absorbing. One of its strong claims to reality is its inconclusiveness, a characteristic so pronounced that it has been possible to show the film with two different endings, of which the less determinate—though the alteration has left in it a few loose ends—is really the more artistic and arresting.

The impression left by the production is one of small subtleties and fine distinctions and of a certain pervasive golden haze hinted at in the title—for whatever the problems of the characters in this story, the depression is not among them. So strongly indeed does this fact appeal

to the audience that the film stands in danger of slipping over into unreality, but is saved by the vigorous simplicity of most of the characterizations, notably those of Bette Davis and George Brent. As to fine distinctions a notable, though exceptionally concrete, example is that of change in the very moment of anger from the smashing of a framed portrait to the extraction of the portrait and the smashing, with no less vigour, of the frame alone. In this atmosphere Ruth Chatterton seems so admirably at home that it is an effort to recall her in any other, and though former roles may have presented more opportunities for dramatic conquest, none has been quite so finely and graciously satisfying.

In strong contrast to this stands the latest production of another of the great ladies of the screen—Elissa Landi. *The Woman In Room 13* is a painfully commonplace and hackneyed plot trying desperately to hide behind a whirl of feverish activity and surging passion, with the result that, but for a few scenes of freshness and charm which contrive to slip in before things get really 'hotted up', there is not a genuine moment in the whole artificial emotional orgy, not a solid foothold in a morass of melodrama. Ralph Bellamy gives his best—and a good best at that—to a thankless part, and Neil Hamilton goes through the motion with good enough grace. Elissa is charming of course and there are those early moments, but for her real talent—for the art of giving beauty and meaning and distinction to the most trivial or commonplace sequence, there is no opportunity whatever. The court scene particularly—shades of *The Trial of Mary Dugan!*—is an abominable piece of 'steam roller' for which somebody ought to be shot.

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